



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

## San Francisco Railyard Alternatives and I-280 Boulevard Feasibility Study (RAB)

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## Citizen Working Group (CWG) – Meeting #1 Summary

Reception:  
415.558.6378

**MEETING DATE:** Monday, August 1, 2016  
**MEETING TIME:** 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm  
**VENUE:** Walking tour – 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Mississippi Street  
Meeting – Firehouse #30 Community Room – 1275 Third Street

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415.558.6377

### Attendees:

**Members:** Ron Miguel, Devanshu Patel, Daniel Murphy, Corinne Woods, James Haas, Bruce Agid, Rick Hall, Jackson Fahnestock, Brian Scully, J.R. Eppler, Ratna Amin, Jennifer Stein, Tammy Chan, Alice White, Ted Olsson, Adina Levin, Sophie Maxwell, David Brentlinger

**Citizens:** Roland LeBraun ; Casey Fromson (Caltrain)

**Study Team:** John Rahaim, Director Planning Department; Susan Gygi, RAB Study Manager; Joe Speaks, CH2 PM; Alia Al-Sharif (facilitator), Sarita Williams, and Peter Lauterborn from Barbary Coast Consulting; and Al Williams from Al Williams Consultancy.

**Makeup session CWG attendees:** Howard Strassner, Nathan Mee, Brian Shaw – Held 8/23/2016

### Purpose: RAB Study CWG Kick off meeting and walking tour

### Summary - including Questions and Comments from the meeting:

The CWG members met on the corner of 16<sup>th</sup> and Mississippi to commence a walking tour of the study area with stops at 16<sup>th</sup>/Mississippi (Caltrain grade crossing with 16<sup>th</sup> Street), Mariposa and I-280 (overpass of Caltrain tracks, directly under I-280 and at the interchange of Mariposa with I-280), Mission Bay Drive/7<sup>th</sup> Street/Caltrain tracks, and at Fire Station 30 (1275 Third Street).

Susan Gygi, Study Manager, reminded the members that the study is complex and multi-faceted, and that one of the objectives of the CWG is to fully process the many options and challenges facing the project area. She thanked the members for agreeing to participate in this process.

During the walking tour and at the meeting afterwards, questions from members were asked and answered. See the summary below.

**QUESTION:** How does the City expect to balance all the competing interests?

**ANSWER:** By providing all of the information that will be available from the RAB Study, it is our hope that the policy makers will have the information they need to make those tough decisions moving forward.

**QUESTION:** It is essential that we get a deep briefing on existing transportation planning and history of other tunneling projects. Will we get that during this CWG process?

**ANSWER:** CWG Mtg #2 will look at the plans for tunneling in the area. The Study team will provide examples of similar work elsewhere and various construction methods often utilized.

**QUESTION:** How do emergency vehicles get to the hospitals when trains are going through the at-grade intersections?

**ANSWER:** When the gates are down and emergency vehicles must go from west to east, there are two options: wait within the queue of vehicles for the gates to rise, or detour utilizing Mississippi, Mariposa and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. The detour is approximately 1.5 minutes in length (1 minute, 30 seconds). The gate down time averages from 1 minute to 1 minute 40 seconds currently. Future traffic implications at various times of day depend on the alternatives being considered in the RAB study.

**QUESTION:** How long will the cuts for the underpass(es) be? – It’s critical to know how Caltrain and California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) plan to fit their trains in the tunnel. How will this impact on other nearby neighborhoods?

**ANSWER:** The grade separated roads (trenched likely) will be discussed in the second meeting of the CWG and a graphic will be shown that will represent the length of the depressions based on the 2010 CHSRA drawings and known conditions in the area. To give you an idea, the length of the 16<sup>th</sup> Street trenching would be from approximately the California College of the Arts (Wisconsin/Arkansas Street) to just west of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. But please remember it’s not only 16<sup>th</sup> Street but every street that also intersects 16<sup>th</sup> would be lowered to maintain the same movement options through the intersection(s). The corners of each intersection could end up being 30-50 feet in the air.

As for Caltrain fitting in the tunnels - there are four tunnels in San Francisco numbered 1-4 traveling south. Tunnel 1 is located directly south of Mariposa Street. All four tunnels are over 100 years old, eligible for listing on the national historic register, vulnerable to sea-level rise, often flood, and will need to be “notched” out on the top as they are currently not tall enough to allow for the overhead electrical system that Caltrain will be installing

The largest impact on the neighborhoods will be the number of gate-down closures at the two at-grade intersections at 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Mission Bay Drive. Currently, Caltrain operates 5 trains per peak hour per direction. After electrification (2020/2021) they will operate 6 trains per peak hour per direction. High Speed Rail (2025) will operate up to 4 additional trains per peak hour per direction. That would mean that there could be as many as 20 trains per hour on the tracks during peak hours. With gate down closures taking between 1 minute and 1 minute 40 seconds on average per Caltrain train, you can see a potential problem especially at 16th Street. Add to that Caltrain wants to go to longer trains and HSR trains will be about 2x the length of a current Caltrain train. Caltrain is upgrading their signal system (CBOSS/PTC – Communications Based Overlay Signal System – Positive Train Control) which should give some improvements to the gate down times but the time difference has yet to be determined. And, given that both Caltrain and HSR will be slowing to stop at either 4<sup>th</sup>/King or 4<sup>th</sup>/Townsend (DTX), the trains will not be traveling much faster than they are today within SF.

Please note that Caltrain will not be fully electrifying their fleet in 2020/2021. Only 75% of their fleet will be electrified. There is not a plan currently to fully electrify the fleet. CCSF and the other funding partners of Caltrain want Caltrain to fully electrify but there is no current plan or funding to make that happen. Until the fleet is fully electrified there will still be diesel trains utilizing 4<sup>th</sup>/King and will be used on the Baby Bullet Caltrain service. If the fleet isn’t fully electrified by the time DTX is built, the diesels will remain at 4<sup>th</sup>/King as they cannot operate within the tunnel.

There are three options to address the gate down delays:

- (1) leave it as is with at-grade crossings – this will result in up to 20 closures of between 1 minute and 1 minute 40 seconds (Caltrain’s current closure rates) or longer during the peak hours. Traffic will experience significantly greater delays crossing the at-grade intersections and emergency vehicles will be impacted.
- (2) grade separate the streets by trenching them – this was the plan in 2010 by CHSRA when they were planning on having their own tracks rather than sharing the Caltrain tracks. Either way, it would trench the streets of SF (16<sup>th</sup> and Mission Bay Drive and intersecting streets) somewhere between 30 and 50 feet below their current location.
- (3) grade separate the Caltrain/HSR tracks by placing all rail in a tunnel underground and reclaiming the street grid exclusively for vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic. All three options will be discussed in CWG Mtg #2.

**QUESTION:** How does this process influence HSR, Caltrain electrification, etc.?

**ANSWER:** The RAB Study is a San Francisco Planning study which will inform and be informed by the other work currently underway including HSR, Caltrain Electrification, Transbay Transit Center, Core Capacity, City transportation and transit studies, etc.

**QUESTION:** Will land use scenarios include jobs, housing, and revenue projections? Will you push the envelope to include higher numbers as San Francisco is trending higher than originally anticipated in both housing and jobs?

**ANSWER:** In CWG Mtg #3 we will look at the railyard relocation/reconfiguration options, I-280 Boulevard options as well as land use scenarios. The work on those components is looking at a range of scenarios including one with the existing land use, and another pushing the envelope with jobs and housing options. A preliminary estimate of value capture (revenue projections) for both options will be provided based on the assumptions made. Please remember that the study is the starting point to determine if there are items worth looking at further and more in-depth. The options provided will give a good range of possibilities.

**QUESTION:** This is the same project we worked on a few years ago; I-280 is a non-starter for many people.

**ANSWER:** With relation to the “project” being around for a “few years”, that is correct. Two years ago, the RAB Study began by looking at 25 years of information completed by every agency and in the region on each of the 5 components of the study, only one of which is I-280. The study (Phase I) then determined which options made sense to study further – even if individual options were discounted in a previous study – and looked at new options as well. Phase II the study will take the individual options of the components and combine them into up to three alternatives. One alternative will depict the plan as it is anticipated to happen now (DTX gets built, Caltrain/HSR run on at-grade tracks in the City, 4<sup>th</sup>/King remains as is or alters slightly; grade separate the city streets at 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Mission Bay Dr.)

**QUESTION:** When will traffic numbers be available?

**ANSWER:** CHSRA and Caltrain are currently undertaking the Blended Service Operations Modeling (when HSR and Caltrain are on the same tracks at the same time). That information is not available yet, so working closely with the SFMTA and the City’s traffic engineers, the Study has made some traffic assumptions so we could move forward. We’ve used the largest range of options so that when work by CHSRA and Caltrain is completed, we can incorporate the specific numbers with minimal time lag. As for the I-280 Boulevard traffic we’re also working with Caltrans, SFMTA, and SFCTA on two bookend scenarios that will show the ends of the options available to manage traffic moving through the project area. Please note – the traffic analysis will not look at every intersection or every street but more of a screenline (an analysis that provides a means of comparing the results of a traffic assignment with traffic count data) across a few streets in a geographic location and will not disperse the traffic outside of 1-3 intersections east/west of the boulevard options. More study will be needed if this component moves through the process into Phase III and Phase IV. CWG Mtg #3 will focus on the I-280 Boulevard options and preliminary traffic numbers will be available.

**QUESTION:** Will traffic numbers be post processed to account for public transit mode share changes?

**ANSWER:** For the level of analysis that we are doing in this portion of the Study, the existing transit mode share will be used in association with increases in traffic anticipated by 2030 with the exception of utilizing rail passenger data for 2030 from Caltrain and HSR as available. This will result in a conservative number.

**QUESTION:** What about improvements to the remainder of the transit network? Is it being considered?

**ANSWER:** The RAB Study is working with awareness of intended transit Improvements within the Southeast section of the City. Our findings can be incorporated into other citywide transit planning efforts underway, including Connect SF, Core Capacity project (being run by MTC), and various other projects. In addition, as part of the Warriors EIS/R mitigation, a new 16<sup>th</sup> Street Ferry dock is anticipated. Information available from that work will also be included in the overall assessment of transit/traffic for the RAB Study.

**QUESTION:** What about a new BART tube?

**ANSWER:** We’ll speak a bit more about that in CWG Mtg #2 but the BART tube is beyond the scope of the RAB study. It is being looked at in relation to many other projects within the region including the

Core Capacity Project as well as Connect SF and others. The RAB study has looked at ways not to preclude a potential BART station somewhere in Mission Bay and how to incorporate it into the overall system.

**QUESTION:** There is no representation of drivers on the CWG roster.

**ANSWER:** While this subset of the population is not specifically called out, many of the members are also drivers within the neighborhood and the region. In addition, Caltrans sits on the Technical Advisory Committee as do members of the SFCTA and SFMTA.

**QUESTION:** What are the high-level cost estimates?

**ANSWER:** CWG Mtg #4 will look at the full alternatives and give preliminary estimates of probable costs for each element and the alternatives as a whole. It is important to consider that certain options may have a certain costs that would be changed (higher/lower) depending on other complementary features of a full alternative. That meeting is scheduled tentatively for Nov/Dec 2016.

**QUESTION:** Will timelines for the various components and projects be made available?

**ANSWER:** In CWG Mtg #4, schematic timelines of potential alternatives s will be provided. Timelines for existing projects (Caltrain Electrification, HSR coming to SF, DTX/Transbay Transit Center) will be available at CWG Mtg #2.

**QUESTION:** Will a funding plan be identified for improvements?

**ANSWER:** As this is a Study, a specific funding plan will not be identified but potential funding sources will be identified and discussed.

**QUESTION:** What is the source of funding for the Study?

**ANSWER:** The RAB Study is currently funded through Phase II through three grants and a small amount of Planning General Fund. \$1.7million has been secured through three grants – two from Metropolitan Transportation commission (MTC) and one from Strategic Growth Council. In addition, the Planning Department has allocated \$125,000 for the work. The remaining phases (Phase III – determination of the preferred alternative, Phase IV – environmental clearance, and Phase V – implementation) have not been fully funded.

**QUESTION:** Will there be a google group started? How will answers to individual questions be transmitted

**ANSWER:** At this time, it is not anticipated that a Google group will be utilized. Instead, any question can be directed to Susan Gygi, Study Manager for the City and a response will be sent to the specific individual. As the topic areas are discussed in the upcoming CWG meetings, any comments received prior to the meeting will be reiterated to the group as appropriate with the same answer provided. It is possible that all correspondence questions can be transmitted to the group at the next CWG meeting if requested. This option will be discussed at the CWG Mtg#2. As a reminder, Susan Gygi stated that if you have any questions or comments about the Study, you are welcome to call or email her at any time.

**General Comments:**

- The project creates an incredible opportunity to consider urban mobility in addition to trains.
- There should be high-level objectives for the CWG to guide the work we are undertaking.

**Next Steps:**

- A roster of CWG members will be made available.
- CWG meeting #2 date will be identified from the four options provided to accommodate the most members and posted online. A makeup for that meeting will also be provided to insure all members have a comprehensive understanding of the various components and answer any questions that exist.
- A preliminary list of high-level objectives will be prepared for distribution and discussion at CWG Mtg #2.