



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

San Francisco Railyard Alternatives and I-280 Boulevard Feasibility Study (RAB) Citizen Working Group (CWG) – Meeting #5 Summary Notes

1650 Mission St.
Suite 400
San Francisco,
CA 94103-2479

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, March 2, 2017
MEETING TIME: 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
VENUE: Mercy Housing Community Room, 1180 4th Street

Reception:
415.558.6378

Fax:
415.558.6409

ATTENDEES:

Members: Ron Miguel (Chair), Adina Levin, Brian David Shaw, Corinne Woods, Daniel Murphy, David Brentlinger, Howard Strassner, J.R. Eppler, Jackson Fahnstock, Jennifer Stein, Rick Hall, Sophie Maxwell, Tammy Chan, Ted Olsson

Planning
Information:
415.558.6377

Citizens: Stacy Cocke (Representing Caltrain), Roland Lebrun, Peter Rice, Derek Penrice, Roscoe Mapps, Claire Feung

Study Team: John Rahaim, Director Planning Department; Susan Gygi, RAB Study Manager; Joe Speaks, CH2M Project Manager; Alia Al-Sharif and Peter Lauterborn, Barbary Coast Consulting; and Marsha Maloof, Al Williams Consultancy

Makeup sessions CWG attendees 3/15/2017: Bruce Agid, Alice Light, Devanshu Patel, James Haas; 3/22/2017: Ratna Amin; 3/27/2017: Nathan Mee

MEETING PURPOSE: RAB STUDY OVERVIEW CONTINUED AND REVIEW OF CWG QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Susan Gygi welcomed the CWG Meeting #5 attendees and thanked them again for their participation. Ron Miguel, CWG Chair, reviewed the agenda outlined in the PowerPoint and walked the attendees through the materials.

When a CWG asked about the public meeting schedule, Ms. Gygi answered that the Study team is anticipating a public meeting in summer 2017. She reminded the group that this will be the second public meeting. The first meeting was held in early 2016 and provided the public with an introduction to the study. A CWG member flagged their concern regarding the ability to cover all of the information presented to the CWG at the public meeting.

Ms. Gygi informed the CWG members that the Study team is working on a video that will be completed in advance of the public meeting. It will be made available online and at the meeting, and will focus on the core goals of the RAB study, allowing people who haven't been as involved in the Study a deeper level of understanding.

A CWG member recalled the crowded room at the first public meeting and asked that the Study team secure a space large enough to accommodate hundreds of attendees with various interests.

PROJECT UPDATE AND RELATED PROJECTS BRIEF

Ms. Gygi provided an overview of recent study updates and their timeline implications. She also introduced the group to the Connect SF Project, directing participants to the Planning Department's website on the integrated transit planning efforts – connectSF.org.

While updating the CWG members, Ms. Gygi noted that city departments participating in the RAB Study have asked for additional quantitative and qualitative analysis to clarify the implications of this project on the broader transit network. The Study team is working to answer those questions over the next few months to better support the alternatives analysis and help future decision-making.

Ms. Gygi informed the CWG that at the request of Caltrain, CHSRA, and TJPA, a meeting is planned for the end of the month (tentatively March 28) with these agencies and the Planning Department to provide an update on the progress of the Study.

Ms. Gygi informed the CWG members that the CHSRA DEIR/DEIS is delayed until October of 2017. The newest timeline shows a preliminary preferred alternative to be released in August with the Draft EIS/R released in October 2017.

Stacey Cocke from Caltrain provided a brief update on the Caltrain electrification process and recent issues related to federal funding. She noted that the FTA is deferring approval of \$647 million in funding for Caltrain electrification. She flagged that depending on the length of the delay, it could potentially impact contractors. Caltrain underwent a two-year process to secure the funding for core capacity was to culminate in a full funding grant agreement (FFGA). All administrative steps and statutory requirements were met. FTA has stated that they intend to defer the request until the president's budget. Caltrain is focused on communicating the need for the project to policy makers in Washington. In the interim, Caltrain was able to reach agreement with the vehicle and infrastructure contractors to extend the "limited notice to proceed" allowing them to focus on design and long-lead items (securing key resources and assets that take a long time to procure) proceed to June 30, 2017.

CWG members asked Ms. Cocke about the role of politics in the FTA decision. Ms. Cocke stated that Caltrain understands the political overlay, but is focusing on communicating the tangible project benefits – most specifically jobs (e.g., a manufacturing plant in Utah to be established by the contractor to produce vehicles, etc.). She repeated that Caltrain is relaying this message in Washington.

CWG members stated that Caltrain's plan to move forward seems disconnected from this study. Mr. Rahaim noted that the urgency behind the RAB Study to move to a decision this year, so that the findings of the RAB study can be integrated into Caltrain's ongoing push for electrification. One participant suggested that the investigation of alternatives appears to be "coming late to the game" and agreed that a decision is needed this year.

One CWG member asked Ms. Cocke how Caltrain would proceed if they don't receive the federal funding. Ms. Cocke stated that, at this point, Caltrain would not begin any construction until all of the funding is in place. The discussion continued on federal funding issues and one CWG member asked about the trickle down affects across several regional projects. Ms. Cocke confirmed that California has seven full funding agreements, so the FTA funding picture is really important, but hard to manage right now given the potential for change under the new administration.

Further discussion posed the question of whether the region is starting to think about local funding. Ms. Cocke said that Caltrain's eyes are on the original plan for federal funds. They haven't started conversations on alternative funding.

A CWG member asked whether a no-HSR scenario would affect Caltrain electrification and Ms. Cocke confirmed that it absolutely would. Caltrain has seen a letter sent by GOP legislators asking for a reconsideration of High Speed Rail in California. She stated that despite a strong relationship, Caltrain electrification is a separate project and the letter from GOP legislators had several inaccuracies that they are working to correct.

There was a statement from a member of the public suggesting that it would be possible to electrify only the DTX portion of the alignment (not the entire Peninsula). Joe Speaks, technical consultant from CH2M, suggested that this is an oversimplification that is not entirely accurate.

PRESENTATION OF AGENDA

Ms. Gygi proceeded with the PowerPoint presentation distributed in advance of the meeting (PowerPoint slide #8, Meeting #4 Recap).

Peter Lauterborn, Barbary Coast Consulting, presented findings from the CWG Input questionnaire. The findings review focused on important issues as reviewed on slide #12 and acceptability of options on slide #14.

He noted that questions regarding the 22nd Street station revealed that CWG members were focused on station amenities, rather than actual station location. It was also noted that in reference to the importance of the I-280 Boulevard component of the project; 45% of CWG respondents replied that it was not important.

Slide #12 showed that, overall, members prioritize transportation issues over land use issues. Mr. Lauterborn noted that this may be due to the nature of the study being transportation and land use focused. In reference to slide #20, the Study team reviewed responses to a question about the desired uses for land that may become available. As the City has consistently heard, housing, open space, and retail office space are most important. This slide confirmed this information with housing and open space/parks prioritized.

A CWG member asked for a deeper explanation into the preference for tunneling Caltrain/HSR. Mr. Lauterborn stated there was a strong preference for tunneling of rail rather than further bifurcating the City. It is important to continue to provide access to/from Mission Bay and trenching the streets can be detrimental to communities. As stated by those CWG members who did not prefer tunneling the rail, there are concerns over costs. Ms. Gygi stated that RAB is beginning to ferret out the full costs of what may happen in the City in the future. She noted that as they look at these options, they don't look at them from a short-sighted, today-only point of view, which could preclude something better down the line. The City wants to fully understand the decisions they are making and shape San Francisco from a proactive standpoint, not a reactive standpoint.

One CWG member expressed concern that CWG members may not be communicating the Study messages to the community. The Study team and the City believe that a decision on the alignment needs to be made by the end of 2017. Another CWG member noted that all of the input has come from the CWG members so far and that the Study team hasn't been gathering information from the community. They asked, "Is there a potential way to get this information out to more people?" Mr. Lauterborn stated that the CWG survey is just one part of the input process, noting that a larger public input process will follow closer to the public meeting. He reiterated that, if appropriate, the Study team hopes the CWG members are sharing what they have learned at the CWG meetings with their constituents, as well as inviting the Study team to come speak with their groups.

Mr. Rahaim stated that the technical portion of the Study has taken longer than expected, including the decision to extend the technical analysis. To better understanding of the full cost - full benefit tradeoffs, some of the work that would have been completed in Phase III of the RAB study is now being completed in Phase II. To complete that additional analysis, the public meeting is being delayed somewhere between 3-5 months from now. As soon as the date for the meeting is determined, it will be released to the CWG members. He noted that the Study team will look to the CWG members to help spread the word about the public meeting.

Several CWG members stressed that it is important to separate the I-280 component from the alignment decision. They noted that the emphasis on I-280 has caused confusion and skepticism, especially coming out of the last public meetings in 2016. Mr. Rahaim agreed. There was further discussion of how the project components need to be communicated.

One CWG members stated that this is an extremely far-reaching project with long-term implications. They looked forward to seeing how this element will be effectively communicated to the public through the materials presented at the public meeting.

One CWG member noted that studying the alignment is also about Silicon Valley: People living in Silicon Valley work and travel to/through San Francisco. They noted that residents from Silicon Valley will need to have a voice, too.

Another CWG member noted that there are numerous economic considerations beyond just construction costs. Travel times, including the long-term value of faster travel times, is essential to communicate as part of the Study. Another CWG member noted that the messaging to the public should emphasize that all costs are being considered in the RAB study.

One CWG member stated, "This is about the next century, not just the next 10 or 20 years. We cannot just talk about money (construction costs), we need to talk about the long-term benefits. We have a responsibility, and the Planning Department has a responsibility, to look out 100 years. We need to look at the PUC and how they overcame skepticism to their large long-term infrastructure investments." Mr. Rahaim stated that the closest

thing to a 100-year decision that he could think of was the Golden Gate and Bay Bridges, which were completed about 80 years ago. He urged the CWG members to imagine how different San Francisco would be if either of those decisions were made differently.

Mr. Lauterborn added that, at this point in the process, the Study team is trying to gather community input on what these long-term priorities are.

Mr. Rahaim stated that the I-280 component of the project had previously been a distraction to the components of the project that are of immediate and should be the key focus. It should be clearly communicated to the public that the CWG – and the Study – has chosen not to focus on I-280 because it is not linked technically to the alignment alternatives.

The group discussed how to broaden the cost implications conversation to include related costs such as construction impacts, improvements to the transit network, and travel times. Mr. Rahaim noted that these are precisely the focus of the extended technical analysis currently underway. He also added the consideration of land value and land value capture as a means of financing, reiterating that these are all aspects of doing a complete cost-benefit analysis.

The discussion shifted to land development and growth, and how to communicate the CWG's priorities and the relative importance of growth. Some CWG members acknowledged the City's focus on building housing and asked, "Where is all of the housing?" Mr. Rahaim talked about balancing the needs and priorities for development, and underscored his personal belief that we need a park or other large open space in this area of the City. He noted that those types of decisions affect land values, and that is important.

PLANNING THE PUBLIC WORKSHOP

Ron Miguel introduced the next part of the meeting – a discussion of the public workshop. Before diving into the questions, the chair challenged the CWG members to work with their affiliated community organizations to help people understand that this is a 100-year decision to encourage people to attend the workshop. He also noted that they will need to help people understand that projects take a long time to be formed, planned, and then started.

Referencing the PowerPoint slides, Mr. Miguel asked the CWG members a series of questions intended to refine the goals for the public workshop. Responses to these questions can be found below. It should be noted that the Study team has grouped similar responses.

1. What do we want the public to know?

Individual CWG member comments included:

- To understand the benefits of the potential options represented.
- To understand the qualitative effects of the decision and what's at stake for the City.
- To get a sense of the real outcomes of this project and to be able to lay down the vision.
- The meeting should talk about the mode shift and the benefits for livability and the environment.
- 22nd Street station may be a strong connection to engage the public.
- Explain why we are doing this. Why aren't we just accepting what Caltrain and HSR had already planned to do?
- We must communicate why the Study is important. This is not just a land use decision, but what is at stake at a higher level.
- To know that this is a major decision effecting long-term outcomes for this part of the City.
- Help the public see a transformative view – the City will be different after these projects have been achieved and the coming changes will launch other transformations. The Study is looking at the future of San Francisco.
- Show the public the benefits of the different options with respect to the various goals (connectivity, housing, etc.) and connect benefits to those who would be affected regionally. These projects will require regional consensus. Earlier discussion of cost is not just about the dollar cost, but should look at a range of regional choices and the relative value of different options.

- To see that this is the chance for the public to express their preferences in a way that is in the City's best interest. The public needs to have its voice heard.
- We are empowering the public to look at their future – and this is what cities are about. Empower them.
- The public doesn't understand that they still have a voice in this, and that their voice is still being heard. This project goes well beyond just rail and looks at various issues related to growth.
- People are going to need context behind these projects, as well as the data on the housing imbalance. We are selling them on the future, and yet that future is not perfectly clear. Growth targets are based on regional projections. To some, those are not comforting projections. We are going to have to realize that we are talking to a crowd that is tired of the rapid change. The vision is for a future that is unclear.
- There are people that are tired of change, yes, but there are a lot of people who will also be excited by the choices.
- *Member of the Public:* Really important that this body communicates consistent and accurate information, including tunnel costs, station location, and I-280.

2. What do we want to learn from the public?

- We want to hear their reaction to the different possibilities that are laid out before them.
- Understand their reaction to all the work we have been doing up until now.
- How do people want to interact with Caltrain/HSR service?
- Their reactions, and the event, will be influenced by what the media is telling them.
- Need to tell the public what we learned from them in the first meeting and how this study has already reacted to that.
- How the public wants to interact with the system – how they will use the stations.

3. What does a successful meeting look like?

- Good attendance, as judged by the number and variety of people that attend, including where attendees come from and who they represent.
- The location of the meeting must have better transit access and draw a larger cross section of the public [than the first meeting].
- Getting people there with some background on the project. Would like to have the planned project introduction video available a couple of weeks before the meeting as a recruiting tool.
- If the I-280 component has to be included, it should be minimal. Give them a timeline that shows why we are not discussing I-280 today.
- A successful meeting would be measured by people wanting more engagement AFTER the meeting – something that makes them want to participate and stay engaged. The sign in station at the meeting has to capture everyone who is coming in and their information.
- Need to have FAQs that people can take with them.
- People need to hear what others have to say – this is just one room of interested citizens drawn together. If we capture the opinions in the room, then we can take this dialog to other interested groups.
- A success is if we challenge people to push the conversation forward. The public may feel that given the situation in Washington, we should just stop.
- Mr. Lauterborn stated that the meeting can be framed in the following way: a decision is going to need to happen, change is coming. Either way, the decisions are still going to be made so this is the opportunity to provide input on how it's made.

4. What conversation would you like to spark among attendees?

In reviewing this question, the chair stated that the group had already answered this as part of the earlier questions. He stated that the CWG is going to have to engage in these ongoing conversations as part of their ongoing outreach.

- All of these components are 100 year decisions. The first question that must be answered is what alignment; that needs to be answered right now. Other decisions (such as I-280) our on another timeline and will be made over the next 20-30 years,

- 18-wheelers could be the first autonomous vehicles. This could become the next big question related to highways and bridges.
- The importance of giving the public near-term context so that they can understand how much the project area is going to change. The current picture is already out of date with known plans on the books, and the vision is for the next 100 years. Our project must show them at least the 10-year projects that are changing so much, so fast.
- We need to de-emphasize the 100-year focus, and help them focus on the immediate alignment decision.
- We should be able to do both. At the public meeting, the presenters should be able to convey the complete context – immediate context, change in 10 years, implications over the next 100 years.
- An international focus would be helpful. A lot of good things are happening around the world.

PUBLIC WORKSHOP DETAILS AND NEXT STEPS

Mr. Lauterborn reviewed slide 26, discussing the potential layout of the room and the approach of using stations to help people take in the information.

Ron Miguel stated that he would like the CWG members to act as ambassadors at the meeting, including wearing badges, acting as guides, and sharing their project knowledge. They would not act as part of the governmental body, but as the citizens they are.

Two CWG members had comments regarding public feedback collection. The first was that the meeting should have a place where people can leave notes and comments. The other is that the meeting should have something, a comment card or a website URL that people can take away to record and submit their comments later.

One CWG members suggested a room much larger than the audience you anticipate with lots of chairs available. Another CWG member asked if there will be relative cost information by the time of the workshop. Ms. Gygi confirmed that they will be.

A CWG member asked if there will be graphic visualizations to show the public what the project is creating. Ms. Gygi noted that the Study team has produced certain views and images and will share them. The CWG member emphasized the need to make sure the images are understandable to the lay person, noting that there should be enough visual precision for public to empathize with the solution.

Ms. Gygi concluded the meeting by reviewing the next steps, including revisiting the Study outline and timing for the next CWG meeting. She noted that meeting #6 will be approximately one week prior to the public meeting and costs will be reviewed.