



SAN FRANCISCO
**PLANNING
DEPARTMENT**



SFMTA | Municipal Transportation Agency

March 24, 2011

Mr. Roelof Van Ark
Chief Executive Officer
California High Speed Rail Authority
925 L Street, 1425
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: San Francisco Comments on Locating Proposed High-Speed Train Facilities Near
Caltrain Bayshore Station

Dear Mr. Van Ark,

This letter reflects the San Francisco response to the latest available drawings of proposed California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) high-speed train (HST) facilities near the Bayshore Caltrain Station. City agencies previously conveyed general background about plans in the Bayshore area to CHSRA in a letter dated November 17, 2010. That letter requested that CHSRA incorporate four design conditions into its design efforts.

We have recently received drawings of proposed HST facilities in the Bayshore area, dated November 2010, including: a main line with two sets of tracks carrying Caltrain and HST, an HST maintenance facility and track leads to and from the main line, and a set of rail crossovers to convey trains to and from each of the two sets of tracks. City agencies have reviewed these drawings in relation to San Francisco planned and proposed transportation and land use projects in the vicinity and provide the following comments to address the design issues in more detail.

The remainder of this letter is divided into two parts: design issues important to San Francisco; and additional issues of concern and questions for the CHSRA team regarding the proposed HST facilities.

Design Issues:

1. **Bayshore Caltrain station should remain near its current location.** San Francisco and its partner agencies are developing conceptual plans for a new intermodal station to best accommodate adjacent neighborhoods and connecting transit services via the Bayshore Intermodal Station Access Study. While the exact location of the future station is still under discussion, our priority is to create a station that is well-integrated with surrounding transit-oriented development and in close proximity to new and existing neighborhoods in San Francisco.

The former Schlage Lock site in San Francisco, adjacent to the current station, is planned for a mix of uses, including high-density housing that will specifically rely on and complement the current station. The project's master plan and environmental review have already been fully approved by the Planning and Redevelopment Commissions. The land to the south, in Brisbane, called the Baylands, is currently undergoing an environmental process. The 'heart' of that site's most transit-oriented, mixed-use portion is currently envisioned for the area near the current station, immediately south of the Schlage site (as a continuation of the Schlage site's urban character) and bounded to the east by the Caltrain tracks and to the south by the proposed Geneva Avenue Extension.

The November 2010 CHSRA drawings show a relocated Bayshore Station in Brisbane substantially south of its current location, beyond even the proposed Geneva Avenue Extension. The station is shown surrounded by a complicated set of proposed HST facilities, including multiple sets of tracks required for the rail crossovers and access to the maintenance facility. The CHSRA-proposed station location, abutted on all sides by multiple tracks, would make access by transit users difficult, cut the station off from nearby supportive land uses, and create an inhospitable waiting environment for train passengers. This location would be substantially distant from the transit-oriented 'heart' of the Baylands and require an impractical and unacceptably long walk from the future Schlage neighborhood. The City is unclear on the purpose in, or necessity of, relocating Bayshore Station as far south as indicated.

In light of these issues, the most promising location for a new Bayshore station is north of the proposed maintenance facility and rail crossover tracks, at or very near the current station location in order to avoid the complex HST maintenance and crossover facilities and to serve nearby land uses. To be consistent with the Bayshore Station Study's goals of supporting strong intermodal connections and neighborhood access, and to fulfill San Francisco's priority to preserve a community-friendly station interface on the western and northern sides of the station, San Francisco would like to see a revised HST design that reflects these parameters.

2. **The planned Harney-Geneva Bus Rapid Transit line must be able to connect directly to Bayshore Station.** The BRT project is under conceptual development;

its implementation is required as part of the Candlestick Point – Hunters Point Shipyard land development entitlements, approved in 2010. An immediate, direct connection that does not require long walks between BRT and Caltrain is critical to the success of this major redevelopment and realizing citywide transportation goals.

The November 2010 CHSRA drawings point to the desirability and viability of one of the Bayshore Station Study’s alternative connection concepts in particular – a direct BRT connection to Caltrain near the existing Bayshore Station. The area containing the HST crossover and maintenance-yard access tracks would preclude a reasonably direct BRT-to-Caltrain connection, so connecting BRT to the existing station is the most promising option. San Francisco has been exploring with Brisbane and the Recology waste processing facility multiple options to connect the BRT from the east, including through the Recology site (either on an elevated guideway or underground). This option has San Francisco’s support, and we think it is a feasible solution for all involved parties. The other option, to provide a BRT facility on the Geneva Avenue Extension itself, would result in too far an intermodal transfer connection with the Caltrain station at its current location. The BRT project has been developed at the conceptual design level only, but CHSRA should ensure that the proposed HST facilities are compatible with such a direct BRT connection, including the potential for an east-west trench that would link the BRT to Caltrain by crossing beneath the railroad tracks in the immediate vicinity of the current station location.

3. **T-Third Light Rail Transit extension should connect as planned.** Another major component of the future Bayshore Station is the extension of the T-Third LRT line to Bayshore Station, offering direct, seamless connections between all three major transit services. The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) has conducted preliminary engineering design for its T-Third LRT extension, assuming its termination at the existing Bayshore Station. This planned extension is another reason why the station should remain near its current location, since moving the station southward would add cost and raise feasibility issues. San Francisco will transmit an engineering drawing of this project; proposed HST facilities should be compatible with this design.
4. **Schlage Lock site plan details may conflict with the HSR proposed ROW and track envelope and power substation.** As mentioned above, this important land use project has been approved at the master plan level, and site preparation work is underway. The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA) has been working with the private landowner on the street network, open spaces, and building pad locations, in preparation for subsequent implementing permits. The site has been designed based on existing Caltrain right-of-way dimensions and station location. The proposed HST facilities, including a wider rail right-of-way, a proposed power substation and an access road, appear to impact the adjacent Schlage Lock building pads and open space plans. San Francisco will transmit the

latest Schlage Lock engineering drawings and would like to work with CHSRA to resolve any potential conflicts.

5. **Train service from the Bayshore Caltrain Station should be able to connect directly to the Transbay Transit Terminal.** The Bayshore Station is emerging as a major transit hub with a one-stop light rail, BRT and bus connection to downtown San Francisco, a key feature in supporting the approved and proposed nearby development. This station also provides the Bayview neighborhood, an economically challenged and isolated community, with the fast and direct transit service to jobs-rich downtown that other San Francisco neighborhoods enjoy. An unfortunate consequence of the CHSRA-proposed rail alignment within San Francisco is that passengers traveling between Transbay and Bayshore would be required to transfer via the 4th & King/4th & Townsend station. This required transfer would also apply to passengers heading to Transbay from the other San Francisco Caltrain stations at 22nd Street and the future Oakdale Station. This transfer penalty would make transit travel time and convenience less competitive against private vehicles, and would hinder the transit-oriented planning which has become essential to the future of both this community and the region.

Additional Questions on Proposed HST Facility Designs:

Q1. Why is the track lead surrounding the maintenance facility designed to stretch so far north? It encompasses what appears to be un-programmed land within the facility's boundary. The land in question has been envisioned for potential non-HST use. Is it possible to down-size the maintenance facility boundary to resolve that potential conflict?

Q2. What would be needed for the facility to accommodate Caltrain maintenance and storage needs currently fulfilled at 4th/King? Given that the HST project will diminish the available storage facilities at 4th/King for Caltrain and that the City would like to explore reasonable air-rights development over 4th/King, it seems that a joint HST-Caltrain facility would make sense, if not ultimately prove necessary.

Q3. Why does the maintenance facility design not provide access from the main line to the south as well as the north? It seems prudent to allow such access for moving trains to the yard from the south without requiring those trains to travel first, out-of-direction, to Transbay and/or 4th & King.

Q4. Please provide a revised drawing that shows the wider HST/Caltrain right-of-way overlaid with the existing Caltrain right-of-way from Blanken to Sunnydale Avenue.

We will contact your staff to schedule a coordination meeting in the near future. We look forward to continuation of a cooperative and successful planning effort to bring the benefits of high-speed rail to California and the San Francisco peninsula.

Respectfully,

SAN FRANCISCO STAKEHOLDERS TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

By:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L.L. Saage". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and a long, sweeping underline.

Leroy L. Saage, PE
Deputy Director for Capital Projects
San Francisco County Transportation Authority

cc: Fred Blackwell
John Rahaim
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