



Special Meeting Agenda

Thursday, April 14, 2016
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 10 a.m.

THIS IS A PHONE CONFERENCE MEETING

Teleconference Number: 1-712-432-1212
Participant Code: 432-600-639

Enclosure

A. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Dhaliwal

B. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

1. California High Speed Rail Authority Draft 2016 Business Plan


Discuss impact of revised Phase One alignment to the Northern San Joaquin Valley and other business plan areas of concern, and approve letter from the San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council to the High Speed Rail Authority outlining concerns.


2. 2016 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)


Discuss the revised fund estimate for the 2016 STIP and its adverse impact to critical highway projects in the San Joaquin Valley, and approve letter from the San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council to the Governor outlining concerns.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

This portion of the meeting is reserved for persons wishing to address the Council on items within its jurisdiction but NOT on this agenda. Public Comment will be allowed during the Discussion/Action Item above.

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Mr. Dan Richard
Chairperson, California High-Speed Rail Authority
770 L Street, Suite 800
Sacramento CA 95814

April 14, 2016

Re: California High Speed Rail (CHSRA) Draft 2016 Business Plan

Dear Mr. Richard:


The San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council, representing the metropolitan planning agencies for the eight county region, is submitting this letter detailing our concerns with the proposed new routes in the CHSRA Draft 2016 Business plan, the lack of support for the blended service concept, and our continued dismay with the outreach and coordination efforts between the CHSRA and its public sector partners. We stand in support of the concerns outlined by the Central Valley Rail Working Group, who has been involved in the coordinated planning for passenger rail service between Sacramento and Merced since 2006.


The draft business plan greatly delays closing the gap between Northern and Southern California. The 2012 Revised Business Plan stated the closing of this gap was "the state's highest priority for intercity rail". For many years the promise of the early HSR connection at Merced and improvements to conventional intercity rail, commonly called the "blended service concept" have been essential for support from the Northern San Joaquin Valley and Sacramento region. Not only does the current draft plan leave in doubt any real funding for connections between Merced and Sacramento, the draft plan also does not provide funding support for improved connections between Sacramento and San Jose or between Merced and San Jose.


The draft business plan includes a commitment to invest \$2.1 billion between Burbank and Anaheim. But previously, the CHSRA was also committed to providing funding support for investments in "conventional" services, which would connect to the Initial Operating Segment (IOS) of high speed rail. While staff recognizes there are investment needs in the Burbank to Anaheim corridor, the draft plan does not propose "blended service" investment priorities that will benefit the northern San Joaquin Valley region for decades.

Three intercity rail corridors in Northern California offer significant promise to increase ridership for the initial operating segment of HSR. The following investments along these three corridors reflect the active rail corridor planning efforts the Central Valley Rail Working Group has been involved in over recent years:

- \$1.0 billion in connectivity improvements for San Joaquin Rail Service between Fresno and Sacramento
- \$1.0 billion in connectivity improvements, for the Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) Service between Merced and San Jose through the Altamont Pass

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- \$1.0 billion in connectivity improvements along the Capital Corridor between San Jose and Sacramento
- Funding from the Central Valley Wye connection to the Merced Station in order to improve Northern California high speed rail ridership prospects

The CHSRA 2016 Business Plan should include an enforceable commitment for investing in near-term conventional rail connectivity improvements between Sacramento, the Bay Area and Northern San Joaquin Valley. It is important for the CHSRA to specify where this funding will come from and that it will be a priority to have improved “conventional” intercity rail service. Intercity rail investments along the San Jose to Sacramento and Fresno to Sacramento corridors can become an important “feeder” service to the phase one HSR system.

Finally, we request that the CHSRA fulfill the earlier commitment for funds to support rail planning coordination in Northern California. As such, the Authority should release the \$53.9 million of Proposition 1A Funding authorized by the Budget Act of 2012 for planning work along the Merced to Sacramento Corridor. These funds are needed to enable the planning, environmental and engineering work needed to provide improved passenger rail service between the future Phase 1 HSR service and Sacramento, and to provide the foundation for full Phase 2 HSR implementation

In closing, we request that CHSRA fulfill the promise in the prior business plan to fund the blended service needs in the northern San Joaquin Valley. We equally feel that the connectivity of HSR to Merced is vital for successful interregional passenger travel in the north Valley and sustainable growth of educational centers like UC Merced. We also request that the southern portion of the phase one alignment extend into the City of Bakersfield rather than a terminus 20 miles north at an almond orchard. The lack of consistent and ongoing communication and outreach between HSR staff and critical public partners, like the metropolitan planning organizations, continue to stymie and hinder our ability to proactively plan and coordinate for this significant public infrastructure project. Should you have any questions or need additional information, I can be reached at (209) 235-0600. Thank you in advance for your consideration in addressing our concerns.

Sincerely,



Amarpreet Dhaliwal,
Mayor, City of San Joaquin
Chair, San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council

CC: San Joaquin Valley Legislative Delegation
Jeff Morales, CHSRA



Governor Edmund Brown
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

April 14, 2016

Re: State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Funding

Honorable Governor Brown:

The San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council, representing the metropolitan planning agencies for the eight county region, is submitting this letter detailing our concerns with the proposed reduction in funding for the STIP program and its impact on critical highway projects in the San Joaquin Valley. At their January 21 meeting, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) approved a revised Fund Estimate for the 2016 STIP that will require the alarming deletion of over \$750 million in funding for California projects. The STIP helps fund state highway, intercity rail, and regional highway and transit capital improvements. There are extremely important projects that have been in development by Regional and Local Agencies, and in many instances in partnership with the State, for many years. These projects help achieve national and state goals and priorities including helping regions meet state air quality goals consistent with SB 375, and will help improve safety, reduce congestion, improve local facilities for drivers, bicyclist and pedestrians, and most importantly create jobs.

The revision to the STIP Fund Estimate is due to the estimated decrease to the State's price based portion of the gasoline tax that is currently the only fund source for the STIP. This is a volatile source of funding since it is subject to adjustments based on fluctuations in the price of gasoline. The current rate, set by the Board of Equalization, has decreased from 18 cents to 12 cents per gallon as of July 1, 2015. Due to the price of gasoline in the past year, the Board of Equalization is expected to reduce the tax further from 12 cents to 10 cents per gallon in 2016. As such, the CTC adopted a revised Fund Estimate at their January meeting that factored the reduction in the price based tax for the five year STIP period starting in Fiscal Year 16/17 through FY 20/21. This action resulted in a decrease of more than \$750 million in capacity and the current predicament of needing to delete the same amount in project funding.

In the San Joaquin Valley, this would mean a possible deletion of \$160.9 million in STIP funding for the following critical projects:

PROJECT	STIP AMOUNT
Fresno County, Excelsior Expressway	\$2,142,000
Kern County, Freeman Gulch Widening - Segment 2	\$9,662,000
Madera County, South Madera 6 lane	\$1,087,000
Madera County, Madera 6 Lane	\$4,759,000
Merced County, Los Banos Bypass - Segment 1	\$6,166,000
Kern County, Freeman Gulch Widening - Segment 1	\$31,088,000
Tulare County, Tagus 6 Lane Southbound Widening	\$49,000,000
Merced County, Livingston Widening Southbound	\$33,950,000
San Joaquin County, Stockton to Escalon Double Track Project	\$23,000,000

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We urge you to take action on the address and restore STIP funding to these and other critical transportation projects throughout our state. During the current special legislative session, many ideas have been brought forward to increase and stabilize sources of transportation funding. Recently, proposals by Governor Jerry Brown, Senator Jim Beall and Assemblyman Jim Frazier aim to remedy the issue with the price based excise tax to restore funding for transportation projects. Governor Brown proposes to restore the tax to 18 cents and Senator Beall and Assemblyman Frazier propose to increase the tax. A fix must be made to address this funding crisis that is forcing our regions to delete critically needed STIP funded projects.

We support restoring the price base excise tax to its former rate and allowing the STIP funding revenue to adjust with inflation. Californians are frustrated with the declining conditions of their transportation system and want their leaders in Sacramento to act swiftly to provide funding needed to repair roads and bridges, reduce traffic congestion, expand transportation alternatives and make the system more sustainable. We believe that Californians understand and support the need to maintain continued investment in regional transportation projects as well as improvements to the local road network, equally in a state of disrepair.

California's road and highway maintenance needs are growing without a clear plan for stable financing. From the moment we open our front door and drive to work, bike to school, or walk to the bus stop, people are dependent up safe, reliable local streets and roads. Police, fire, and emergency medical services all need safe reliable roads to react quickly to calls. A few minutes delay can be a matter of life and death. The local transportation system serves as the "last mile" for the movement of goods that keeps our economy running. Fixing our roadway infrastructure truly is one of those "pay now or pay more later" situations. A dollar spent now will save five to ten dollars in the future, unless we continue to defer all this work. Once the system is in a state of good repair, the need for maintenance will be reduced.

In closing, we are encouraged that through your leadership the transportation funding crises can be solved. We respectfully request your support to work with fellow Legislators to help identify a timely solution to address these serious issues facing our region and the entire state. Should you have any questions or need additional information, I can be reached at (559) 233-3148. Thank you in advance for your consideration and acceptance of this comment letter.

Sincerely,



Amarpreet Dhaliwal,
Mayor, City of San Joaquin
Chair, San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council

CC: San Joaquin Valley Legislators
Members, Senate Transportation and Housing Committee
Members, Assembly Transportation Committee
Mr. Bob Alvarado, Chair, California Transportation Commission
Commissioners, California Transportation Commission
Mr. Brian Kelly, Secretary, California State Transportation Agency
Mr. Malcolm Dougherty, Director, California Department of Transportation
Mr. Bill Higgins, Executive Director, CalCOG
Mr. Sarkes Khachek, Moderator, Regional Transportation Planning Agencies