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# Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting #1

November 3, 2015, 7:00 p.m. to 9:20 p.m.

Police Department Conference Room, 7301 Hanna Street, Gilroy, CA 95020

## Meeting Summary

### I. Call to Order

Members present: Peter Leroe-Munoz (Chair), Toby Echelberry (Vice Chair), Sharon Albert, David Almeida, Steve Ashford, Eldon Chappell, Tom Fischer, Craig Morris, Guy Preston, Mark Turner

Members absent: None

Staff and consultant present: David Bischoff and Sue Martin, City of Gilroy; Bruce Brubaker and Seung Hong, PlaceWorks

The agenda for the November 3 CAC meeting was posted on October 29, 2015.

### II. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Peter Leroe-Munoz welcomed everyone. The Committee members, staff, and consultants did self-introductions.

### III. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

There was no public comment on items not on the agenda.

### IV. Committee Role and Procedures

David Bischoff provided a presentation on the Committee's role and procedures, which were accepted by the Committee. The Committee agreed on Tuesday from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. for future CAC meeting day and time.

### V. Selection of Vice Chair

The Committee selected Toby Echelberry as Vice Chair.

### VI. Station Area Plan Project and Background

Bruce Brubaker, Associate Principal, PlaceWorks, presented an overview of the background, purpose, scope, and schedule for the Station Area Plan project. The Committee took no action. The presentation is available for download here:

<http://www.gilroyhighspeedtrain.org/meetings/citizen-advisory-committee-cac/>

The following summarizes key issues discussed during the session.

- The CAC and the project team briefly discussed vertical and horizontal high-speed rail (HSR) alignment options and the pros and cons of each alignment. During the Station Area Plan process, the project team’s study will assume a modified at-grade alignment and a HSR station Downtown, which was identified as the preferred alignment and station location during the 2012 visioning process.
- California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) has not yet determined a preferred alignment or station location. For the next 2 years CHSRA will evaluate alternative alignments and prepare an environmental impact report under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CHSRA will decide on a preferred alignment based on a range of factors, including analysis in CEQA documents and input from communities. The purpose of Gilroy’s Station Area Plan process is to inform CHSRA about Gilroy’s vision and preferences.
- A CAC member asked when HSR would start running. According to CHSRA’s 2014 Business Plan, the entire length from San Francisco to Los Angeles will start to run in 2029. If there is enough funding and interest, some segments could start running earlier than 2029. The completion of construction depends on funding availability.
- There was a discussion about using the existing railroad tracks for HSR. Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) owns the railroad right-of-way from San Jose to Gilroy. CHSRA does not yet have an agreement with UPRR to use the UPRR tracks. If UPRR and CHSRA fail to reach an agreement, CHSRA will need to build additional tracks parallel to the UPRR tracks.
- The CAC asked if CHSRA had studied other high-speed rail examples, including those in Europe and Asia, regarding their impacts on economic development, noise, environmental issues, and community development. CHSRA staff responded that CHSRA had been studying other examples of HSR in locations similar to Gilroy.
- The CAC and the project team discussed outreach strategies for the Station Area Plan. The project team will hold a number of stakeholder meetings, community workshops, CAC meetings, and City Council/Planning Commission study sessions. In addition, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is going to help the City of Gilroy on community outreach. This effort is likely to take place in early 2016, and will focus on reaching out to lower income people and the Hispanic population who often do not come out or participate in planning processes.

## **VII. Draft Opportunities and Constraints Report Discussion**

Bruce Brubaker, Associate Principal, PlaceWorks, presented the findings of the draft Opportunities and Constraints Report. Mr. Brubaker encouraged the Committee to provide their feedback on the Opportunities and Constraints Report to Mr. Bischoff. The following summarizes key questions and issues discussed during the session by topic.

### **Land Use and Development**

- The CAC discussed the possibility of locating retail stores under HSR tracks. CHSRA staff responded that for safety and security reasons, having businesses under HSR tracks may be constrained.
- The CAC discussed potential impacts of a HSR station to Downtown businesses. Several CAC members expressed concern about losing Downtown foot traffic due to a HSR station that provides retail, restaurants, and offices. The goal is to create a synergy and positive energy between HSR and Downtown businesses.
- Historic qualities of the existing station were discussed. A CAC member did not agree with the existing station's location considered as its historic value. A lot of people do not know that the station is located on Monterey Street because it is set far back from the street.
- A CAC member commented that art and cultural activity should be identified as an opportunity in Downtown. Downtown has many assets, including Gilroy Center for the Arts and Limelight Actors Theater, and the City's General Plan calls for supporting the arts and improving Downtown's appeal.

### **Transportation and Parking**

- The CAC asked whether the impact of the new metering lights at U.S. 101 on-ramps was evaluated. The project team responded that their impact to transportation would be assessed during the planning process.
- The CAC discussed impacts of HSR crossings to emergency response time. The City's Fire and Police Department representatives are part of the project's technical advisory committee. The project team will reach out to them to solicit their input.
- The CAC asked when the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC)'s Capital Corridor project would start its operation. This project requires modifying UPRR track configuration to allow trains to stop at Gilroy. While it is a fully funded project, the completion timeline is yet unknown. TAMC and UPRR need to reach to an agreement to modify UPRR tracks.
- The CAC requested to study impacts from ridesharing, such as Uber and Lyft. Ridesharing, kiss-and-rides, private shuttles, and shared bicycles will all be considered in the following planning process.

- The CAC discussed limited north-south capacity in Gilroy. Currently, Church Street, Monterey Street, and Santa Theresa Boulevard carry most of north-south traffic. Extension of Railroad Street can be an option.
- The CAC expressed concern about HSR’s impact on Downtown parking. During the planning process, potential locations for parking will be closely investigated and assessed. Potential for shared parking facilities and other strategies will be explored.
- The CAC discussed potential bicycle facility improvements in the Plan Area. Currently the City does not have any plan to provide bicycle lanes on Monterey Street due to limited right-of-way.
- The CAC commented that bicycle parking and lockers should be provided in a safe place at the train station.

#### **Utilities and Environmental Issues**

- The City of Gilroy and CHSRA are discussing the possibility of shared infrastructure, including parking and utilities. CHSRA will evaluate HSR’s utility needs and potential environmental issues as part of the CEQA review.
- The CAC questioned whether existing stormwater drainage along the existing railroad tracks would need to be relocated. It will be studied as part of CEQA review. As the exact location and configuration of the HSR alignment is yet unknown, impact to the drainage system cannot be determined at this time.

#### **VIII. Next Steps**

The first community meeting will take place on November 17, 2015 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Eliot Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room. The next CAC meeting will be held in Summer 2016.

#### **IX. Adjournment**