
Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting #3

July 13, 2016, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

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

Meeting Summary

I. Call to Order

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

Members absent: Eldon Chappell

Staff / Consultant: David Bischoff, Henry Servín, City of Gilroy;
Bruce Brubaker, Janet Chang, PlaceWorks

The agenda for this Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting was posted on July 10, 2016

II. Welcome

Mr. Peter Leroe-Muñoz welcomed everyone.

III. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

There were no public comments on items not on the agenda.

IV. Recap of Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting #2 and Community Meeting #2

David Bischoff explained the objectives of the meeting and turned the presentation to Bruce Brubaker, Associate Principal, PlaceWorks. Bruce Brubaker gave a brief overview of the project schedule and gave a recap summary of the last CAC meeting on June 7, 2016 and last community meeting on June 28, 2016. The summary included comments from committee members and members of the public on the Alternatives and High-speed Rail (HSR) vertical alignment options.

Detailed summaries of these two meetings are available on the project's website at the following link: <http://www.gilroyhighspeedtrain.org/documents/>

After the presentation, CAC members asked questions and provided comments. Below is a summary of the questions/comments and following discussion.

- **Why were many of the small groups at the community meeting unable to provide comments for a Draft Preferred Alternative?** David Bischoff explained that the community members were presented with a lot of information at the meeting. The City

increased its efforts with outreach so many of the meeting attendees were hearing about the project for the first time and were more focused on project issues less relevant to the Alternatives themselves (i.e. East Gilroy HSR station option and no HSR in Gilroy).

- **When is the next community meeting?** David Bischoff indicated that a date for the next community meeting has not yet been set, but would be during August or September of this year.
- A CAC member commented that at the next community meeting, they would like to hear from more residents who live in east Gilroy and that the meeting should focus more on the HSR vertical alignments rather than proposed land uses.

V. Discussion of Overall Project Issues

Bruce Brubaker continued his presentation with an overview on overall project issues, including the objectives and outcome of the 2011 Visioning process and the purpose of the current task at hand with the planning of a potential Downtown HSR station. He explained that from the Visioning process, the Gilroy City Council provided direction to further evaluate the Downtown station and associated opportunities and issues. This led to the current planning process, the Downtown Gilroy Station Area Plan project. The outcome of the planning process would aid California High-speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) with their decision-making.

During the presentation, CAC members asked questions and provided comments. Below is a summary of the questions/comments and following discussion.

- Several CAC members commented that they would like to see more visual representation of what the different vertical alignments would look like in Downtown Gilroy to get a sense of relative scale.
- **What is the length of the “lead-in” for HSR at the Downtown station?** David Bischoff answered that the lead-in, or transition from two tracks to four tracks, at the northerly and southerly areas of Downtown would be about a quarter of a mile long each way. The station platform would also be about a quarter mile long.
- **Has Union Pacific (UP) made a decision about their willingness to relocate and raise their tracks in coordination with HSR?** Guy Preston, CAC member and Northern Regional Delivery Manager of the CHSRA, answered that progress with UP has been slow. However, CHSRA plans to publish a Draft EIR early 2017 that will state an initial Preferred Alternative alignment despite whether UP has not yet made a decision. A final approved alignment would occur in late 2017 or early 2018.
- **Is CHSRA working with other transit agencies?** Guy Preston answered that an agreement with UP could create joint service with other transit agencies connecting

more northern cities to Gilroy. However, without an agreement with UP, CHSRA would have to create its own right-of-way.

- **How many miles of track are being negotiated with UP?** Guy Preston answered that about 30 miles of track are being negotiated. Morgan Hill prefers HSR to be located along US 101 and is interested in Gilroy's alignment preference.
- Several CAC members commented that after reading the findings described in the Alternatives Analysis Report, they feel that the Downtown station location may not be the optimal location and that there should be more consideration for an East Gilroy station location instead. David Bischoff noted that it is ultimately not up to the City to decide which station location is best (CHSRA will make the final decision), but the City should plan for Downtown in case the Downtown station location is chosen by CHSRA. Guy Preston indicated that there are separate community working groups and open houses to discuss the issue of a station in East Gilroy versus Downtown.
- Guy Preston indicated that information given at the last community meeting about high-speed train frequency through Downtown was outdated. He provided the following corrected information about train frequency stated in CHSRA's 2016 Business Plan, noting that these are planning assumptions and final service patterns will ultimately be determined by the HSR contract operator and the market:

Before Los Angeles HSR segment opens: 2 trips per hour during peak times in each direction (4 total), 1 trip per hour during off peak times in each direction (2 total). All trains would stop in Gilroy.

After Los Angeles segment opens: 6 trips per hour during peak times in each direction (12 total) - 2 of those trains in each direction would stop in Gilroy (4 total), 3 trips per hour during off peak times in each direction (6 total) - 1 of those trains in each direction would stop in Gilroy (2 total).

During this agenda item, several members of the public provided public comments:

- John Donahoe, resident and Stanford Director of Planning, noted that the information presented at the last community meeting was difficult to understand for the average person. He also expressed his support for the revitalization of Downtown.
- John Litzinger, resident and an engineer for large-scale infrastructure including the HSR San Jose to San Francisco segment, asked the CAC to consider what a future station in east Gilroy would look like in the long-term and how it will affect the current Downtown. A future station area in east Gilroy would not be surrounded by farmland and may transform into a second downtown, which brings its own opportunities and issues.

VI. Discussion of Elements to Create a Draft Preferred Alternative

Bruce Brubaker continued his presentation and showed examples of high-speed rail in other parts of the world. He explained how high-speed rail has made a positive impact on other communities, such as increased connectivity, creation of public spaces, and integration of retail uses near the track.

The final section of the presentation was a discussion of different elements to create a Draft Preferred Alternative. CAC members discussed elements related to residential, commercial, and office land uses. Below is a summary of the questions, comments, and discussion of these elements.

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

- Several CAC members expressed their preference for a high amount of housing in Downtown. One CAC member felt a low to medium amount of housing was preferable.
- One CAC member thought that new housing should be expanded beyond the Plan Area. Another CAC member referenced how BART stations have created opportunities for a lot of new mixed-use housing in BART station areas. One CAC member did not prefer high-density housing because he felt that it would become low-income housing. Another CAC member noted that high-density housing and low-income housing are not the same.
- **How were the opportunity sites determined?** Bruce Brubaker explained that the buildout calculations looked at parcels that are currently either vacant or underutilized.
- **How does Downtown's proposed development affect development in Gilroy outside of Downtown?** David Bischoff explained that Downtown development should not affect development outside of Downtown. There may be other development limitations imposed by the proposed Urban Growth Boundary. Bruce Brubaker added that ultimately development in Downtown will be driven by the market.

COMMERCIAL LAND USE

- A CAC member asked for clarification of how large the listed square foot area numbers are relative to types of commercial development. Bruce Brubaker and David Bischoff provided some examples as a reference: Safeway at 40K-60K s.f.; Target at 120K s.f., Super Walmart at 160K s.f.; large retail center at as much as 1.0 mil s.f. Several CAC members supported a large amount of retail uses in Downtown.
- A CAC member noted that retail should be located within walking distances of residences and that Downtown should be a retail hub.
- Another CAC member referenced Downtown Mountain View as a successful Downtown, noting that it is anchored by an arts/cultural use and that its downtown is located along

a lengthy corridor.

- One CAC member commented that retail needs to be strategically placed and not located at the south end of Monterey Street.
- **What is the amount of current unused business space in Downtown?** Mark Turner, of the Gilroy Chamber of Commerce and CAC member, answered that he did not know off-hand, but could provide this information.
- **Are there enough opportunity sites within Downtown to accommodate high amounts of retail?** Sharon Albert, a CAC member, noted that small amounts of ground-floor retail in mixed use developments can add up to a large amount of retail.

OFFICE LAND USE

- **How many workers are assumed per Alternative?** Bruce Brubaker indicated that the assumption is 1 worker per 250 square feet of planned Class A office space.
- Many CAC members were skeptical that Downtown Gilroy could attract high amounts of office, noting that the project's economic consultant found that the highest amount of office in the Alternatives would not be viable. Bruce Brubaker explained that there could be a high amount of office if high-speed rail is successful and the market conditions are favorable.
- One CAC member commented that Downtown should have more office uses because HSR would increase access to Gilroy, which would increase the need for jobs and office. He also expressed concern about empty office development and suggested implementing form-based zoning as a solution in which many different uses would be permitted on properties. Bruce Brubaker explained that flexible zoning is possible, but assumptions about number of housing units and square footage of retail and office still would be needed for the environmental review. One CAC member did not agree that HSR would be a driving force in the attraction of businesses to Downtown and agreed that zoning in Downtown should be flexible.
- Several CAC members expressed support for the economic consultant's recommended maximum amount of office development (645,000 sq. ft.) because it would create incentive for a firm to build an office campus in Downtown.

DISCUSSION OF ALTERNATIVES

- One CAC member commented that Alternative 1 has too many extremes and that the Draft Preferred Alternative should be a balance of all three alternatives.
- One CAC member stated that the Draft Preferred Alternative should have more housing in the north of the Plan Area.
- Two CAC members commented that development should be focused around Downtown and the station, and that transient uses (e.g. parking and hotels) should be located to

the south.

- One CAC member commented that there should be some space allocated for office uses around the station.
- Several CAC members indicated that tall buildings should not be located in the Downtown core. One member suggested high buildings to be located south of 10th Street. Another member commented that building scale should depend on the planned width of streets.
- **Can the CAC's Draft Preferred Alternative recommendation to City Council also include a recommendation to further study the East Gilroy HSR station location?** David Bischoff and Peter Leroy-Muñoz, CAC member and City Council member, answered yes.

During this agenda item, one member of the public provided public comment:

- John Donahoe commented that the land uses around the HSR station should increase employment and improve connectivity to other transit and the existing community.

VII. Next Steps

Committee members requested that there be another CAC meeting before the next community meeting to finish the discussion of elements to create a Draft Preferred Alternative (i.e. hotel land uses, circulation, arts center location, and gateways). Project team staff will circulate a poll to committee members to confirm a date in early August.

Guy Preston provided the date for the next community working group that discusses the issue of a station in East Gilroy versus Downtown: Thursday, August 11 at 6pm in the Morgan Hill Community & Cultural Center.

VIII. Adjournment

- Summary by Janet Chang, 7-22-16