

## **Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting #3.3**

**November 9, 2016, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

**Gilroy Senior Center, 7371 Hanna Street, Gilroy, CA 95020**

### **Meeting Summary**

#### **I. Call to Order**

Members present: Peter Leroe-Muñoz (Chair), Toby Echelberry (Vice Chair), Steve Ashford, Tom Fischer, Guy Preston, Sharon Albert, Sean Reedy

Members absent: David Almeida, Mark Turner, Craig Morris

Staff / Consultant: David Bischoff, Sue Martin, Rebecca Tolentino, City of Gilroy;  
Bruce Brubaker, Janet Chang, PlaceWorks

The agenda for this Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting was posted on November 4, 2016

#### **II. Welcome**

Mr. Peter Leroe-Muñoz welcomed everyone. David Bischoff announced that Eldon Chappell will no longer be representing the Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission on the Citizen Advisory Committee. He introduced new CAC member Sean Reedy as Eldon Chappell's replacement.

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

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

#### **IV. Recap of Community Meeting #2.1**

Bruce Brubaker, Associate Principal of PlaceWorks, explained that the objective of the meeting is to review comments received on the Emerging Vision from the October 20 community meeting and to confirm a Draft Preferred Alternative. The Emerging Vision showed potential land uses, circulation networks, gateways, and parking locations in preparation of creating a Draft Preferred Alternative. The Draft Preferred Alternative will be presented to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission, Planning Commission, and City Council.

Bruce Brubaker gave a summary of the comments received at the last community meeting

on October 20, 2016. Comments were categorized by station topic: residential land uses; commercial land uses; circulation; land use and circulation at Swanston Lane and Railroad Street; and vision and character.

A detailed summary of the previous community meeting is available on the project's website at the following link: <http://www.gilroyhighspeedtrain.org/documents/>

#### **V. Confirming Elements of a Draft Preferred Alternative**

Bruce Brubaker presented a Draft Preferred Alternative to the Committee and requested comments and discussion. The Draft Preferred Alternative shows the location of the following in the Station Plan Area: (1) proposed land use changes from the existing Downtown Specific Plan, in land use and/or land use intensity; (2) gateway locations to Downtown and the Downtown core/historic downtown; (3) park and plaza locations; (4) Arts Center location; (5) enhanced bicycle network; (6) proposed vehicle network; (7) Downtown parking locations; and (8) high-speed rail (HSR) parking locations. Discussions about the aforementioned Draft Preferred Alternative elements as well as the HSR rail alignment are described below.

#### **HSR RAIL ALIGNMENT**

Committee members discussed the pros and cons of different vertical rail alignment options. There were comments that both vertical alignments create a barrier. The modified at-grade alignment creates a physical barrier between east and west Gilroy and requires the depression of east-west streets. The aerial alignment creates a circulation barrier because Union Pacific (UP) railroad crossings would remain at grade. The aerial alignment also maintains the existing noise impacts from UP, could cause potential light pollution for nearby residences, and may remove historic housing along Alexander Street. David Bischoff clarified that no City-designated historic homes would be impacted. Guy Preston, CAC member and Northern Regional Delivery Manager of the California High-speed Rail Authority (CHSRA), added that CHSRA's environmental review process would review impacts on historic resources.

There was also discussion about the potential land uses that could be located under a HSR vertical rail alignment. Several Committee members indicated that retail, park space, recreational space, or open space could be beneficial land uses underneath the rail. One Committee member noted that an aerial alignment provides better opportunity for potential open space under the tracks and is beneficial for bicycle and pedestrian opportunities. Guy Preston indicated that there has been no definite decision as to what uses under the rail would be feasible. The State would own the land and air space under the rail alignment, but could rent this space out.

The Committee showed favor for an aerial alignment with the UP railway elevated at the

same height as HSR. Guy Preston indicated that an aerial alignment with UP raised could be a possibility, but it requires negotiation with UP and analysis of the UP spur alignment, HSR geometry, and other potential limitations. Other issues to be considered include crossing of the rail over US 101 and the potential acquisition of more properties for additional HSR right-of-way. One CAC member indicated that if this alignment option requires more acquisition of properties, she would prefer another vertical alignment option.

One Committee member indicated that he would like to see visual simulations of the vertical alignment options through Downtown Gilroy. Guy Preston said that he will see if CHSRA can provide these.

## **CIRCULATION**

### ***First Street Vehicle Connection***

Bruce Brubaker and David Bischoff disclosed that the City met with the Gilroy Unified School District since the October 20 community meeting and the School District has indicated that they are not in support of a First Street extension through South Valley Middle School. Alvaro Meza, Assistant Superintendent for Gilroy Unified School District, spoke and explained that South Valley Middle School will already be significantly impacted with the proposed HSR alignment situated through the school property. A First Street extension will further limit the expansion and relocation of the school's facilities especially with an influx of new students added from the proposed residential development in the Downtown Gilroy Station Area Plan. CAC members agreed the extension of First Street should not be further considered.

There was discussion about which party would be responsible for financing new vehicle connections. David Bischoff explained that new streets are added to the City's Traffic Impact System, which is paid for by traffic impact fees. Vehicle connections that are shown in the Draft Preferred Alternative as a part of the General Plan have already been added to the Traffic Impact System.

### ***Chestnut Street Vehicle Connection***

Many CAC members felt that the Chestnut Street extension to Murray Avenue would disrupt the character of residential neighborhoods located along Chestnut Street because of the additional vehicular traffic and potential congestion. A suggested alternative to increase north-south vehicular connectivity was to extend Forest Street, which is already a truck route, from Ninth Street to Tenth Street.

### ***Buses***

One CAC member expressed that buses should stay on Monterey Street for better convenience and that secondary streets cannot accommodate transit traffic. Bruce

Brubaker noted that CHSRA is working and coordinating with Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) to include an expanded bus terminal.

#### ***Martin Street Vehicle Connection***

There was discussion about whether Martin Street should be closed to vehicular traffic at the HSR rail intersection. One member expressed that keeping Martin Street open to vehicular traffic would be better for emergency vehicle access. A recommendation was made to keep Martin Street at existing grade level to enable access to alleys behind Monterey, to have a pedestrian/bicycle access opening at Martin Street, and to also allow emergency vehicle access under the tracks, if it is possible to make that work while not depressing Martin Street.

#### ***Princevalle Drain Vehicle Connection***

There was support for the new vehicular connection across Princevalle Drain since it would add more connectivity for the proposed development located south of Tenth Street.

#### ***Downtown Parking***

CAC members felt that the proposed Downtown parking location at the intersection of Fifth and Monterey Streets was too far from the historic Downtown area. Several members suggested relocating this parking to the intersection of Fourth and Monterey Streets. One CAC member expressed concern over HSR patrons using Downtown parking structures. Bruce Brubaker explained that this could be prevented with parking management.

#### ***HSR Parking***

Bruce Brubaker explained that the HSR parking locations shown on the Draft Preferred Alternative are general and that ultimately CHSRA will determine the exact location of HSR parking. Guy Preston added that HSR may not build a second structure at HSR's initial opening and that it may be constructed later when HSR is extended to Los Angeles. Regarding financing, Guy Preston explained that HSR parking would be built by CHSRA or in conjunction with a private developer. The CAC agreed that the shown HSR parking locations were appropriate.

#### ***Bikeway Connections***

The Draft Preferred Alternative's bikeway network includes the existing and planned bikeway network as well as new potential bikeway connections. New potential bikeway connections include a multi-use path along the rail alignment and more east-west connections. Sean Reedy, CAC member and Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission member, noted that the proposed multi-use path along the rail alignment would be beneficial since it could redirect bicycle traffic from Monterey Street.

The Draft Preferred Alternative’s proposed bikeway network will be presented to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission for their in-depth review and comments.

## **LAND USES, VISION, AND CHARACTER**

### ***Land Uses***

CAC members supported the land uses and their locations shown in the Draft Preferred Alternative. Bruce Brubaker explained that the proposed land uses in the Downtown Gilroy Station Area Plan will act as an update to the existing Downtown Specific Plan.

### ***Gateways***

Bruce Brubaker explained that proposed gateways would not require a reconfiguration of streets, but could have additional standards about architectural design and signage. Several CAC members requested that there be a gateway to Downtown at the intersection of Luchessa Avenue and Monterey Street. The CAC also requested that the gateway to the Downtown Core at the intersection of Monterey and Third Streets be relocated to the intersection of First and Monterey Streets.

### ***Building Heights***

CAC members felt that a building height maximum of 12 stories in the Plan Area was too high. One CAC member noted that building heights in the Plan Area should be no higher than 6 feet.

### ***Parks and Plazas***

One CAC member suggested locating a park in a more residential area close to proposed parking, such as on the east side of Egleberry Street between Fifth and Sixth Streets. Another CAC member did not agree to this location because he noted that the aforementioned location is a parking lot. Any parking spaces removed should be replaced in the proposed Downtown parking structure.

### ***Other***

One CAC member asked about the need and locations for additional electrical substations. Bruce Brubaker explained that there is an infrastructure subconsultant on the project team who will look into this issue later in the planning process.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

John Litzinger, resident and Design Manager for the engineering of HSR, made several comments about the Draft Preferred Alternative:

- In general, he supported the Draft Preferred Alternative;

- He agreed to the CAC’s suggestion to extend Forest Street in lieu of Chestnut Street;
- A Martin Street pedestrian-only undercrossing may still allow emergency vehicle access;
- He suggested making Monterey Street limited to transit, pedestrian, and bicycle access only;
- For an aerial alignment option with UP raised, the storage tracks would have to move further south to US 101 and the station would need to be raised; and
- If the UP alignment was straightened to be parallel to the HSR alignment near Swanston Lane and Leavesley Road, it could allow new development between the rail alignment and Monterey Street. Straightening the UP alignment could be beneficial to UP in regards to maintaining train speeds.

## **VI. Next Steps**

David Bischoff laid out the upcoming schedule for the Downtown Gilroy Station Area Plan. Based on the CAC’s comments, the Draft Preferred Alternative will be refined and presented to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission and then to the City Council in January 2017. PlaceWorks will then refine the Draft Preferred Alternative further and present it to the CAC in early spring 2017. David Bischoff also mentioned that meetings with Downtown property owners and business owners are being coordinated with CHSRA.

Guy Preston announced that there will be CHSRA public open houses in January with CHSRA environmental staff in attendance to answer questions.

## **VII. Adjournment**

- Summary by Janet Chang, 11-14-16