



The City of Burlingame

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December 13, 2010

Governor-Elect Jerry Brown
State and Federal Legislators Serving the Peninsula
Roelof van Ark, CEO, California High Speed Rail Authority

**REGARDING: RESETTING THE PLANNING PROCESS FOR RAIL PROJECTS ON THE
SAN FRANCISCO PENINSULA**

Our City is committed to working collaboratively to build better transportation solutions on the San Francisco Peninsula, of which rail transit is a crucial component. We understand the desirability for cities on the Peninsula to reach general agreement on a transportation vision that will guide the Peninsula into the future.

By working together, we will have greater influence on how to improve transportation options on the Peninsula. We will attract more federal and state funding, as well as private investment, when we agree upon the plan we have for transportation in our respective communities. Moreover, in an era of scarce resources, our suggestions may result in a significantly less expensive yet just as effective program for rail modernization on the Peninsula.

Now that preliminary high speed rail funding has been designated for the Central Valley, we have the time to complete the rail planning process the right way.

Our City requests:

1. An independent ridership study for high speed rail, which is essential to inform the scope of the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) design alternatives. For example, an unbiased forecast may dictate whether we need two tracks or four tracks in some areas, and it may show that a significantly improved Caltrain system can adequately serve the system's needs on the Peninsula – options that have tremendous cost and design ramifications. This analysis is vital and we ask for it to be completed as quickly and objectively as possible.

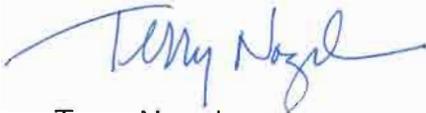
Resetting the Planning Process for Rail Projects on the San Francisco Peninsula

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2. An independent review of the budget and business plan for high speed rail in California. Planning for this project must be grounded in financial reality.
3. An informed discussion among all relevant parties about the freight issues and opportunities on the Peninsula. Freight has environmental benefits for our communities, but there are design constraints that need to be resolved. We want an open dialogue directly with the freight operators and freight customers to develop solutions and build a consensus along the corridor.
4. Restoration of the below-ground alignments through Burlingame in the Alternatives Analysis (tunneling and covered trench). If our desired alternatives, which we believe offer the greatest environmental mitigation, are excluded from the Alternatives Analysis, there is no real opportunity for creative problem solving around both design and funding.
5. As a corollary to No. 4, we believe the decision by the CHSRA to build first in the Central Valley affords all of us the opportunity for a more thorough vetting of alternatives on the Peninsula, with adequate analysis of impacts, before the draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) goes forward. There is no need to rush completion of the EIR, only to have it sit on a shelf and become stale, especially if it fails to assess viable alternatives such as below-ground options. This document should be a viable plan that has the full support of our City.

We understand that other Peninsula cities may be expressing common recommendations.

Sincerely,



Terry Nagel
Mayor