



January 12, 2012

Mr. Roelof van Ark
California High Speed Rail Authority
770 L Street, Suite 800
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: CHSRP Draft 2012 Business Plan

Dear Mr. van Ark:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft 2012 business plan. We have focused our review on the plans overall consistency with our local planning efforts to study the blended system concept in the Caltrain corridor. We have also paid particular attention to the ridership forecast data that would start to inform discussions about the magnitude of impact high-speed rail will have on the Caltrain system.

To begin, we welcome inclusion of the “blended system” concept in the business plan. Specifically, the following concepts identified in Chapter 2 are consistent with what is being locally discussed and explored:

- Investments in the Caltrain corridor to provide Caltrain and high-speed rail electrified service from San Jose to the Transbay Terminal in San Francisco in a way that maximizes use of the existing tracks and minimize impacts to local communities;
- Project level EIS/EIR for the San Francisco to San Jose segment scoped only to evaluate the blended system; and
- Commitment to make early/immediate investments in existing rail corridors to receive the high-speed rail system.

These principles support and add momentum to the local planning effort that Caltrain is facilitating with local partners in defining how to modernize the Caltrain corridor.

In terms of areas of concern, there are three items that are of particular interest to us in having further discussions with the Authority.

1. The continued reference to a full build project for the Caltrain corridor in other portions of the plan does not support Caltrain's focus on pursuing the feasibility of a blended system and represents an inconsistency with the very important Chapter 2 principles enumerated above. We are not locally pursuing a planning process that contemplates a full build project for the Caltrain corridor.
2. It will be important to establish a comprehensive and transparent process for making a future decision on if the ICS is to be expanded north or south. Market potential, as discussed in the plan, is an important criterion, but should be one amongst several that inform the ultimate decision. Buy-in from stakeholders on the decision-making criteria and process will be critical to building stakeholder support.
3. Finally, but very importantly, we are interested in the high-speed rail ridership forecast. With realization of each stage of the high-speed rail system, we need to understand the magnitude of impact on the Caltrain system. Identifying the appropriate level of mitigation measures to support the high-speed rail system in the Caltrain corridor will be critical.

We hope that you find the comments helpful to your on-going planning efforts in advancing the high-speed rail system for California. We will continue to work with our local partners in exploring the feasibility of the blended system for our segment with a focus on balancing the interests of Caltrain, our local partners and the CHSRA.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at leem@samtrans.com, 650-622-7843.

Sincerely,



Marian Lee, AICP
Director, Caltrain Modernization Program

Copy:

Michael Scanlon, JPB
Seamus Murphy, JPB
Dom Spaethling, Consultant to CHSRA
Katherine Strehl, Consultant to CHSRA