



## Transportation Committee

February 28, 2008

### Update on High Speed Rail Project

**Issue:** What happened from SACOG's February 20 meeting with California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) staff?

**Recommendation:** Receive a report on the above meeting and related information and provide comments, as appropriate.

**Discussion:** At its February 7, 2008, meeting, the Transportation Committee asked SACOG staff to keep the committee updated on items of significant interest related to the CHSRA project. On February 20, 2008, Mike McKeever, Olin Woods, Kacey Lizon, and Ed Coviello met with CHSRA staff and their consultant team to discuss SACOG's concerns about the sprawl potential of the high speed train project in the Central Valley. CHSRA Deputy Director Dan Leavitt and consultants Dan Gallagher and Stuart Cohen represented CHSRA.

SACOG staff expressed its concern that the project could have a major negative impact on land use patterns in the Central Valley. Staff advised CHSRA that steps should be taken now to manage the explosive growth/sprawl that is almost certain to occur in the cities where future stations will be located: Sacramento, Stockton, Modesto, Merced, Fresno, Visalia/ Hanford, and Bakersfield. Up to this point, CHSRA's approach to curtailing sprawl has been to propose siting of stations in downtown locations. SACOG staff advised them that if this were their only solution, the result would almost certainly be sprawl/suburbanization on a massive scale with downtown locations transformed into large parking lots.

CHSRA representatives seemed receptive to a variety of suggestions from SACOG staff on how to avert such a scenario. They will be developing a policy to promote growth management/avoid sprawl in the next several months with a target delivery date to their board in June. They asked for SACOG staff's assistance in developing the policy, and we were happy to agree to assist. CHSRA has assembled a team of land use planners to put together the policy; including Elizabeth Deakin from U.C. Berkeley and Jerry Goldberg from Parsons Brinckerhoff. SACOG will receive an early draft copy of the policy with the expectation that we will have a significant opportunity to influence its final form. Your staff was pleased with the responsiveness of CHSRA to SACOG's concerns, and we intend to follow through very aggressively.

On a different but related subject, CHSRA staff confirmed that the State currently intends to place a \$9 billion statewide bond measure before the voters at the November 2008 general election. Those who support the bond measure in the Legislature very much want the Governor's endorsement of the project; however, he has told them that he will not campaign for the measure unless its implementation is tied to significant participation by both the federal government and the private sector. We understand that discussions between the Governor's Office and the Legislature are underway on this subject. Consistent with the Transportation Committee's direction to us at its February meeting, staff will keep the Directors updated on the high speed train project as events unfold.

Approved by:

Mike McKeever  
Executive Director

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