

Office of the City Council

MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** December 15, 2008

**TO:** City Council Colleagues

**FROM:** Council Members Sid Espinosa, Yoriko Kishimoto and John Barton

**SUBJECT:** Request for Report on High Speed Rail Station in Palo Alto

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In November, the voters passed Proposition 1A, the statewide High Speed Rail (HSR) bond measure which raises the possibility of an expanded station in downtown Palo Alto. Proposition 1A authorized \$9.95 billion in bond funds to plan and construct the first phase of the 800 mile statewide rail system. The first phase would connect San Francisco to Los Angeles by way of the Pacheco Pass, identified at the preferred alternative in the High Speed Rail Authority's program environmental impact report. The Pacheco Pass alternative means that the Caltrain corridor would be utilized to connect San Francisco to San Jose and identifies possible stations in either Palo Alto or Redwood City.

A Palo Alto High Speed Rail station raises several important policy considerations for Council to consider. Therefore, we are seeking our colleague's support for staff direction to return to Council within 60 days with a report which responds to the following questions:

1. What criteria and time frame will the High Speed Rail Authority use to select final station locations?
2. What are the potential cost impacts to the City should Palo Alto be designated as an HSR station?
3. What impact will HSR have on existing Caltrain service?
4. What are the anticipated land use, infrastructure and environmental impacts of an HSR station?
5. How and when will decisions be made on how HSR and Caltrain will pass through Palo Alto (trench raised, underground, ground level) and how options might be financed since existing bond financing will not be sufficient?
6. What are the potential economic development impacts to Palo Alto?
7. What are the options for how HSR operates on the Peninsula such as speed and frequency and what mitigations are envisioned?
8. What are the potential economic benefits of HSR access in Palo Alto? What are the potential impacts if the station were located in Redwood City?

We fully expect that staff will have other questions which they are encouraged to include in this report.

We have also consulted with staff regarding possible work load impacts of this request. Planning and Transportation staff is currently working on impacts of the HSR in Palo Alto and is a part of the Department's work plan.

Because the development of High Speed Rail has major policy implications for Palo Alto as well as the State, we urge our colleagues to support this request.