

California High Speed Rail Project

San Francisco to San Jose High Speed Train (HST) Project

FAQ

- 1. Is tunneling an option in the current scope of work? Will details on this option be provided? Can you please describe the underground/tunneling option?**

The High Speed Rail Authority (Authority) will study both the tunneling, at grade and elevated options which will be carried through the EIR process. The tunneling option would involve boring a tunnel or tunnels for the trains approximately 50' below grade. Design would incorporate necessary ventilation and provide additional width needed for escape routes. More information will be available in the design phase of the project.

- 2. What is the width of the proposed rail structure?**

The standards for the HST require a width of 74-75 ft. The HST staff will be looking at each project specific area and can apply exceptions to this standard requirement, but safety will be the first priority. HST staff will try to work with each City in order to develop the best option for each location.

- 3. How tall is the proposed wall/tower for the elevated tracks?**

For the elevated alignment option, the total height will be approximately 21 feet above ground = 16.5 ft clearance for vehicular traffic + structure depth + height of rail/ties. Catenary wires would also need to be placed above the structure. Another option is the split the difference between the road and the structure. If the road is lowered, which would have more of an impact to the surrounding areas, the structure's height could be decreased.

- 4. If HST stops in San Jose, then what happens to the Caltrain service?**

Caltrain would continue to operate as the commuter rail service between San Francisco and San Jose. Caltrain would have to decide whether or not they would want to electrify their trains.

- 5. If Caltrain electrified their system, would they have to grade separate their crossings?**

No, electrification of Caltrain does not require tracks to be grade-separated. It would only increase the speeds of the train. HST has non-standard weight (light weight) equipment and it needs to have its own separate rail system. This is a safety as well as a policy issue.

- 6. Will Caltrain service be interrupted during the construction of the HST?**

Caltrain is planning operate and maintain service during the construction of HST. However, further details on the impact of the HST project on Caltrain service will be analyzed in the project EIR.

7. The HST in Europe avoids highly populated areas such as the Peninsula. Why doesn't the alignment go through highway 101 or 280?

The options of going through US-101, I-280 and the Altamont Pass alignment were analyzed in the Central Valley to Bay Area Program High Speed Rail EIR. The Pacheco Pass was strongly supported by the Bay Area region, cities, agencies, and organizations.

8. How can we submit an official comment to the HST?

Comments can be submitted through the project website (comments@hsr.ca.gov), filling out comment forms at public meetings and either submitting them in person or mailing them in.

9. How will the station locations (Redwood City or Palo Alto) be determined? How large will the stations (parking spaces) be?

Authority will study ridership numbers and land use at each city. Cities will also weigh in on their position on a proposed station based on their community needs and interests. The Authority will either choose one city or the other, or neither of the cities. An 850 space 4-story parking structure was proposed for the Palo Alto station in the Program EIR.

10. Can the HST stop in San Jose and not come through the Peninsula?

The purpose of HST is to provide intercity travel between Los Angeles and San Francisco. However, the EIR for the San Francisco to San Jose HST project will analyze a "No Build" scenario which would be no HST between San Jose and San Francisco, only Caltrain service.

11. Who will make the decision on what the final alternative is? How will the decision be made? What is the appeal process?

The EIR will examine the impacts of moving forward with each alternative and will also evaluate the consequences of a No Build alternative. It will analyze all of the benefits and weigh the pros and cons for each alternative. The Environmental Document will be circulated (public review draft) for review and comment.

The Authority will analyze all alternatives and review all comments before making their final decision on which alternatives should move forward and why. After the EIR has been finalized, there will be a 30-day "statute of limitation" where one can challenge the adequacy of the document, if needed.

12. Whose interests are represented at the Authority?

The Authority is the state entity responsible for planning, constructing, and operating the high-speed train system. The Authority has a nine-member policy board (five appointed by the Governor, two appointed by the Senate Rules Committee, and two by the Speaker of the Assembly). See <http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/about/> for more information about Authority members.

13. How will bicyclists and school traffic (pedestrians) be protected? Will all of the at-grade crossings be kept open?

The Authority plans to grade separate all existing railroad crossings as for both safety and operational reasons. The EIR will also study impacts to pedestrian and bicyclist circulation. Possibilities include closing some of the at-grade crossings or grade separating the crossings, but at-grade crossings for high speed trains will be eliminated.