

# California Rail News

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## Grapevine Rail IS Affordable

### AUSTRALIAN QUANTM STUDY PUTS COST AT \$2 BILLION, FRACTION OF 1994 PB ESTIMATE

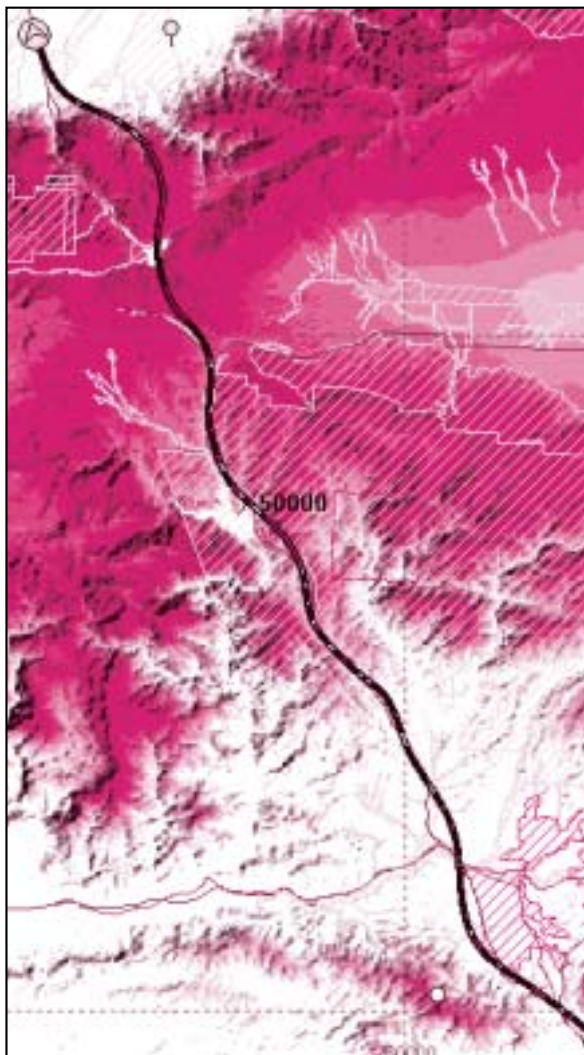
Remember that Bakersfield-Los Angeles High Speed Rail study done by Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB) for Caltrans District 07 in 1994? Someone came up with a better idea on how to do it. Way better.

Disregard everything the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) staff has said about a \$26 billion price tag on a California network. Also throw away the 5-year and 20-year Amtrak improvement plans.

Quantm, an eminently qualified rail engineering firm based in Australia, has used digital elevation data and its advanced geo software to chart a 200 mph route through the Tehachapis, and has estimated it to cost \$2.4 billion in a 3.5% grade version or \$1.9 to \$2.1 billion with 5% maximum grades. Its findings are nothing short of iconoclastic.

For most of a decade, California intercity rail planning has proceeded under a pair of false premises: that the cost of closing the gap in California's tracks between Bakersfield and Santa Clarita is too high to consider and that passenger rail upgrades should consist of improvements to existing freight lines. Both must be re-examined, and the Amtrak improvement programs must be redrawn in light of the Quantm work.

Parsons Brinckerhoff charged Caltrans \$5 million for the dubious advice that a rail line over the pass would cost between \$6 billion



**Wheeler Ridge to Santa Clarita over the Grapevine: Quantm proposed to use the next canyon east, avoiding tangling with I-5 at the tight spot. Map: QUANTM**

and \$8 billion. At the time, TRAC panned the "ski-jump" route PB selected for study, observing that the firm seemingly sought out the toughest terrain in order to maximize tunnel lengths and capital costs.

How different Quantm's concept is from PB's! Instead of aiming tunnels through methane-laden formations and seismic hazards, Quantm has alternatives passing over both the San Andreas and Garlock faults at grade, and has picked relatively benign locations for the few miles of tunnel. This fiscally conservative approach means years could be cut from development and construction time, not only billions from costs.

The lower cost for Grapevine should put it ahead of many projects listed in Amtrak's

\$3.9 billion California 5-year plan, and force an independent redrafting of that plan.

Even in the absence of high speed rail, a Bakersfield-Santa Clarita line now appears to be a viable incremental project for closing the biggest gap in California's rail network. Supporters of this idea say San Joaquin trains and tracks could be extended within 3 years to the foot of the Grapevine.

The second stage could see new 120 mph Talgo sets running through to Los Angeles via Metrolink tracks by 2008. Private investment in a true high speed service through the Valley to the Bay Area could follow, using the same new Grapevine route. Taken one step at a time, we could get a statewide high speed network without the sticker shock induced by CHSRA pricing. All that is needed is a rail agency that really wants to build.

Although Quantm was brought in to review PB's work, insiders say PB is still in control of CHSRA's planning and is extremely jealous of the attention given to Quantm. The Australian firm's independence and integrity have been a breath of fresh air for California rail. Let's hope they get taken aboard by other California rail organizations needing a fresh look at challenging projects.

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### Correction Regarding Report of Caltrans Subcontractor Use

In the January-February issue of CRN, we reported that Caltrans hired a subcontractor of Glass-McClure to evaluate the effectiveness of its advertising. It appears now that this information was incorrect and that Caltrans did not, in fact, hire a Glass-McClure subcontractor to perform such work. The original information was given to CRN by a person in Caltrans Division of Rail who we believed to be a reliable source. However, that source has since disavowed the statement, and therefore we now believe the item to be inaccurate.

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Address Correction Requested

# Sen. Murray Challenges Amtrak on NEC Profit

U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-Washington State), the energetic chair of the Senate Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, is proving to be a key player in the Amtrak funding battle, but one who is not about to accept Amtrak's version of events at face value.

Murray wants Amtrak to succeed, but is severely critical of Amtrak's regional biases and its claims that the Northeast Corridor is profitable. She identifies Amtrak's omission of depreciation costs as a falsification of the NEC cost situation, and derides Amtrak and Bush appointees for short-term decisions (like the Penn Station mortgage) that provided quick cash at the expense of Amtrak's long-term health.

Senator Murray points out that "for 2001, Amtrak's total loss approached \$1.1 billion its highest level in history. When revenue and ridership increase, but losses increase even faster, we are not looking at a formula for self-sufficiency."

The following text is excerpted from Sen. Murray's statement at the beginning of her subcommittee hearings in March:

Currently, Amtrak is imposing drastic spending cuts-while attempting to manage its national rail network. Employment is being slashed. Basic rail car maintenance is being deferred. And environmental compliance projects are being shelved.

In addition, Amtrak is backing out of prior commitments made to the states to improve shared infrastructure. Worse still, Amtrak is engaging in a number of short-term financial transactions to put immediate cash into the railroad to avoid bankruptcy. Unfortunately, these short-term moves will only worsen Amtrak's long-term financial health.

All these measures are designed to milk the railroad along until it might receive a hoped-for federal infusion of money next year. Amtrak is asking this subcommittee to provide it with \$1.2 billion next year for its basic capital and infrastructure expenses. That's an increase of 130 percent above the level provided for this year.

The Bush Administration's posture toward Amtrak's financial situation has only made matters worse. The President's budget proposes that Amtrak funding be frozen next year at the level of \$521 million. Any informed source will tell you that, if we enact the President's budget, we will throw Amtrak into certain bankruptcy. This President's proposal is especially disappointing since this Administration knows every aspect of Amtrak's delicate financial condition.

Secretary Mineta sits on Amtrak's Board of Directors. His Deputy Secretary, Michael Jackson, has represented him at almost every Amtrak board meeting. As such, Mr. Jackson knows more about Amtrak's finances than anyone on this subcommittee, and that is why I have asked him to appear before us this morning.

Last year, Secretary Mineta and Deputy Secretary Jackson signed off on Amtrak's plan to mortgage off parts of Pennsylvania Station in New York for the sole purpose of getting Amtrak \$300 million in cash. That transaction-which boosted Amtrak's outstanding indebtedness for decades-was designed solely to give Amtrak enough operating cash to survive through the end of Fiscal Year 2001. I am told that similar transactions may now be necessary to keep Amtrak solvent through the current fiscal year.

I believe that those are the kind of issues that need to be laid out clearly on the record this morning.

Let me be clear. I want Amtrak to succeed. I believe that intercity passenger rail service plays a critical role in easing congestion in our country. I think it's an important travel option for the American public.

My State ranks second-only behind California-in the amount of direct state subsidy that has been put into supporting Amtrak serv-

ice. My state has put up money-even bought its own rail cars-while other states continue to enjoy far superior service while putting up nothing. My constituents have spoken on the importance of Amtrak.

I plan to do all that I can to help Amtrak succeed, but I plan engage in this issue with a clear attention to the financial facts. There has been a great deal of confusion and downright mythology that has surrounded the Amtrak debate. The greatest degree of confusion has surrounded the issue of the true costs of operating Amtrak's national system. One of my goals for this morning's hearings is to get down to the facts, and to debunk some of the myths.

One Amtrak myth that we need to confront is the representation that Amtrak has been making steady progress towards self-sufficiency.

This morning, the Inspector General will testify that while Amtrak has boosted revenues and limited certain expenses, the railroad has effectively made no progress toward self-sufficiency since the requirement was put into the law in 1997.

## 403(b) Payments to Amtrak

California	\$60 million
Washington/Oregon	\$13 million
Illinois	\$13 million
Missouri	\$6.2 million
North Carolina	\$5.7 million
Oklahoma	\$3.9 million
Pennsylvania	\$2.9 million
Vermont	\$1.6 million
New York	\$1.0 million
New Jersey	\$0

In fact, for 2001, Amtrak's total loss approached \$1.1 billion its highest level in history. When revenue and ridership increase, but losses increase even faster, we are not looking at a formula for self-sufficiency.

It was foolish for some Members of Congress to insist that Amtrak become the only self-sufficient national railroad in the world. That requirement appears only to have succeeded in pushing Amtrak into making short-term financial decisions that have undermined its long-term financial condition.

The second myth I would like to address is the representation that there are Amtrak routes that make a profit. There are none. ZERO. No Amtrak train-whether it is in the Northeast Corridor or anywhere else in the nation-will make a profit this year or next year.

Last week, Amtrak testified before the House Appropriations Subcommittee that so-called profitable routes were subsidizing other train routes.

Well, how can Amtrak make that claim if there are no profitable routes?

The answer is that Amtrak ignores the accounting rules that every other company in the United States must live under. Simply put, Amtrak's analysis ignores depreciation.

The concept of depreciation says that, when a company makes official representations regarding its financial condition, it must recognize that, over time, its assets are going to deteriorate and require replacement.

If a railroad ignores depreciation and hides from the fact that its rail lines and rail cars will need replacing, it can represent that it is profitable until the day when its last decrepit rail car falls off the track.

No company in the United States is allowed to represent that over the long term-either their entire company, or even a single line of business, is profitable while ignoring depreciation.

If they make this representation in public, they are inviting a shareholder lawsuit. If they make this representation on paper, the Securities and Exchange Commission will visit them. Amtrak's financial difficulties today are due in part to the way it has ignored the cost of depreciation.

We have not invested sufficient funds to replace the physical plant and equipment that

Amtrak owns. Instead, Amtrak has been required to borrow more and more money to make only the most necessary investments, boosting its debt burden to historically high levels.

Amtrak owns the Northeast Corridor. The vast majority of federal capital dollars that the railroad has received has gone into the Northeast Corridor. Even so, this corridor is in desperate need of between \$3 billion and \$5 billion just to maintain the current level of service. Over the next decade, it may require as much as \$20 billion.

As a member of the Budget Committee and Chairman of this Subcommittee, I don't see where that kind of money is going to come from. And if we are not going to make that kind of investment, it is not credible to represent that Amtrak's Northeast Corridor trains are somehow viable over the long term while other trains are not.

When you calculate in the actual depreciation and interest costs associated with the Northeastern trains, you find that a number of Northeast Corridor trains lose more money per passenger than trains elsewhere in the country. That is the reason why I am greatly disturbed by the structure of Amtrak's budget request.

Amtrak appears to be taking a bunch of trains hostage and telling a majority of Senators-you either boost our funding by 130 percent or we kill your rail service. There is an implicit message that surrounds Amtrak's budget request.

That message is, if we only get a 92 percent funding increase to the level of \$1 billion, the states that currently enjoy the best rail service and put up none of their own money will continue to enjoy that service while the rest of the country will have to do without.

As Chair of this subcommittee, I intend to have some say in how Amtrak gets funded next year, and I don't intend to play by those rules.

When you look at Amtrak in the same way as you would look at any other company, the fact is that every Amtrak train requires a subsidy.

If we don't have enough money in 2003 to maintain a national system, then, as far as I'm concerned, we can disband the railroad, or let all the states not just a few pick up a portion of the needed subsidy.

Whether we are able to provide \$1.2 billion for next year or just half that amount, I don't intend to subsidize just a regional rail system that protects the status quo for certain states that have put up none of their own funding but throws most of the other states out of the national rail network.

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The California Rail News encourages letters, comments, and reports on local issues. Please submit your material to California Rail News, 926 J Street, Suite 612, Sacramento, CA 95814. Sorry, we do not guarantee return of photos or articles submitted. Deadline for material to be included in the next issue of the California Rail News is May 15, 2002.

### ADVERTISING RATES

Business card \$30, 2 col. x 6" \$100, half-page \$200, half-page color \$300, full-page color \$500. 15% reduction for run of 6 ads, 10% reduction for TRAC members.

# A Parting Shot: Threat to Western Long Hauls

# Coast Observations

**By Alan C. Miller**  
**TRAC Administrative Director**

More than any other single issue, I am asked by our membership about the Amtrak national situation. We are truly at a crossroads with Amtrak. Should Congress listen to the Amtrak Reform Council (ARC), Amtrak as we know it could be dismantled; the outcome of this we could only guess at.

On the other hand, Senator Hollings has introduced legislation which specifically names Amtrak as an essential part of our national defense, citing the ability to move people in the wake of an incident such as September 11, 2001. Hollings' bill (S. 1991) specifically protects long-distance trains as an essential part of the national system (\$580 million/year).

Long distance trains feed our short-distance trains, and the loss of Amtrak would mean California taking on the full cost of shared facilities. Our four long-distance trains also serve as the only intercity rail link for numerous California towns such as Paso Robles, Salinas, Chico, Redding, Dunsmuir, Colfax, Truckee, San Bernardino, Victorville, Barstow, Needles, Pomona, Ontario and Palm Springs. These trains feed connecting passengers to all California corridor trains and are used by Californians to travel within and outside the state as well as by visitors to California. They have lost ridership due to reduced capacity, not reduced demand.

Attacks on long-distance trains are nothing new to those of us in the rail advocacy arena, but it has been several years since a serious threat has arisen; the system has changed but remained national. This attack on the national network is unlike any we have seen before, and the largest threat seems to be coming from the attitude of Amtrak's current upper management.

Amtrak's attitude in the February 1 press release appeared suicidal. Warrington had already angered Congress by mortgaging Penn Station to pay daily expenses, and withheld requested accounting statistics from the Amtrak Reform Council. For the past several years Warrington has stated that Amtrak is on a 'glide-path' to operational self-sufficiency. With the deadline of Oct 1, 2002 approaching, he did a 'one-eighty' and stated that this will not be achieved. Warrington should have pointed this out to Congress years ago instead of waiting until 2002 to ask whether Congress wants Amtrak to make money, or provide a national service. A good point, years late.

In the past, Amtrak has threatened trains with discontinuance to rally national support. Amtrak works because most states have trains and trains are popular with constituents. A national system gets national support, so most members of Congress want to keep Amtrak. But this time, Amtrak publicly asked for \$1.2 billion, which made it appear to the uninformed to be a doubling of their annual operating budget.

Warrington broke this request into \$700 million for capital funding, \$300 million for railroad retirement and interest expenses, and \$200 for "money losing long-distance trains." In fact, little more than 10% of Amtrak's \$1.2 billion request is for long-distance trains. Warrington attacked long-haul trains as being the money loser, as if short and medium distance trains and the NE Corridor actually have an operating profit. This ill-conceived strategy could accelerate the dismantling of Amtrak's network and erode congressional support.

Amtrak's testimony before the House Appropriations Subcommittee that so-called

profitable routes were subsidizing other train routes, is no longer taken as fact by key senators. The view of U.S. Senator Patty Murray of Washington State and chair of the Senate Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee is "there are [no] Amtrak routes that make a profit... whether it is in the Northeast Corridor or anywhere else in the nation."

Murray's portrayal of the budget crisis situation: "Amtrak appears to be taking a bunch of trains hostage and telling a majority of Senators—'you either boost our funding by 130 percent or we kill your rail service'" is devastatingly on-target.

With Warrington gone, we may be able to retain and improve the Amtrak structure, instead of an unknown future with privatization. The United Rail Passenger Alliance has been issuing press releases praising the fact that the long-awaited debate on the structure of Amtrak has finally begun. But has URPA considered that the final outcome may be no more national train system?

Divide and conquer is one of the most effective ways to win a war; we must be united to keep the Amtrak structure as-is with needed improvements, not just throw all the cards on the table and hope for the best. "Don't toss out what you have unless you first have something better to replace it with," points out NARP Vice-President and TRAC member George Chilson.

The Train Riders Association of California fully supports retention of the national Amtrak system. TRAC rejects the Amtrak Reform Council's plan to break Amtrak into separate agencies.

We recognize that Amtrak's financial difficulties must be largely blamed on those members of Congress who demanded the company be profitable operationally, then withheld the capital funds that were needed to achieve this goal. Congress must release these capital funds and expand intercity rail service throughout the nation.

## A Great Choice

**David Gunn, named Amtrak's new President on April 26, is no apologist for poor performance. He has a reputation for tackling huge and intimidating challenges like the reform of the New York City Transit Authority at a time when the subway network looked hopeless. Gunn has far better grasp of technical issues than Amtrak's last two presidents, and is more politically savvy.**

**Gunn's first official comments were, "I have always been a proponent of a strong national passenger rail network, While we face substantial financial and physical challenges, I'm convinced that by securing adequate operational and capital funding, we will be able to rebuild our plant and equipment in an effective and efficient manner, and continue to provide a high-quality service to the traveling public. I'm looking forward to joining Amtrak."**

**Gunn most recently served as Chief General Manager at the Toronto Transit Commission from 1995 until 1999. Before that, he ran Washington's WMATA and worked for three proud passenger roads, the Illinois Central Gulf Railroad, the New York Central and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad in 1964-1967 at the beginning of his career. His hiring appears to indicate that the Bush Administration wants to try to make Amtrak work, not shut it down.**

**CREDIT SENATOR JIM COSTA putting direct pressure on Union Pacific for the breakthrough in getting the new 6th San Joaquin running. If not for the political push, the train could have been permanently blockaded by UP like Amtrak's Las Vegas service... OFF TO A BETTER JOB IN NEW JERSEY goes George Warrington. Some insiders say he was working for New Jersey Transit as Amtrak President. Just as California is the biggest Amtrak donor state, with \$60 million in operations and \$50 million in capital typical over the last 3 years, New Jersey has been the biggest per capita recipient state. It has more basic system Amtrak train miles than California (5270 vs. 4700 daily) despite population less than one quarter of California's... SILENCE IS SCARCE ON BOARD THE QUIET CAR, the Capitol Corridor's promising new idea, especially when the engineer believes the horn is for continuous use for the entire extent of Dixon, South Vacaville, Fairfield and Suisun, when stop announcements are verbose, and when the conductor makes PA system announcements preceded by three overamplified bleeps on the klaxon. One other problem is that curious (and loud) kids in school groups come to investigate... THE REFERENCE TO CAFE STANDARDS in the last issue made a number of rail alphabet soup spouters scratch their heads. Mea culpa. "CAFE" refers to Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency, (and low miles/gallon CAFE figures result eventually in some form of U.S. penance being paid)... THE BUS SUBSTITUTE for the cancelled 8:17pm Emeryville departure for Sacramento is indeed running starting with the April 29 schedule. It leaves Emeryville at 8:45pm. Look for it on the top right of one of the bus pages, not on the train page... CALTRANS DIRECTOR JEFF MORALES, by the provocative act of boarding an Amtrak train with a Metrolink ticket, and months of persistence, has gotten Metrolink and Amtrak to break down some of the tariff barriers between their networks. Starting later this summer or fall, a new program "Take the Next Train" will allow interchangeable use of 10-ride tickets, monthlies, and possibly other fares between Ventura and Orange Counties on the Surfliners and Metrolink... ANY POST—9/11 IMPACT ON CALIFORNIA TRAIN ridership was invisible in total numbers, with all three state corridors near flat in Fall 2001. However, San Joaquin linked bus-rail trip data shows that rail traffic grew 35 percent in city pairs with air service while it declined in most other markets. Apparently, the only reason San Joaquin revenues didn't get hammered since 9/11 is the quantity of refugees from the delays and misery of local air travel... CHECK OUT OUR REBUILT WEB SITE AT [www.calrailnews.com](http://www.calrailnews.com) and while you're there send an e-mail to Congress concerning the need to retain funding for Amtrak, especially long-haul trains serving California. E-mailing Congress is now a mainstream method to be heard. Our site now has a button that links directly to the Capitol Advantage site where you can send a message of your choice to both your senators and member of congress with a single click. Try it at: [www.calrailnews.com](http://www.calrailnews.com)**

# HSR Should Serve San Joaquin Cities, Not Destroy Them

By Alan C. Miller and Richard Tolmach

We all know the promise of high speed rail, which promotes central-city revitalization in Europe while simultaneously discouraging sprawl. But Californians have missed an important piece of the picture: the technology was never meant to run through cities at high speeds. Due to noise constraints and prohibitive costs, 200-plus mile per hour trains should not pass through Central Valley cities. Yet their stations need service by the fast trains. How did the Europeans deal with this basic quandary? (For a hint, see map, right).

## Speed Without Urban Impacts

In a rational plan dictated by engineering and environmental concerns, the 220 mph main line would never touch urban areas. Most Valley cities would be served by semi-expresses starting their runs on Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) tracks where state-funded upgrades promise to raise speeds above 100 mph. Then the trains would switch, outside Fresno, Modesto, or Bakersfield to the high speed line for nonstop service to the Bay Area and Los Angeles. Ordinary trains would link all current stations between Bakersfield and Sacramento to the high speed service.

HSR main lines do not belong in the center of urban areas because of their 220 mph top speeds. HSR trains operating above 160 mph produce a sound envelope similar to the one at the end of a runway, clearly not compatible with cities. This envelope reaches as much as 95 decibels near the source at 186 mph.

While some sound-reduction technologies (such as wheel-skirts and sound walls) have proven effective, they will not reduce high speed travel noise to a level compatible with residential or commercial development. Putting HSR through cities at 220 mph is like putting freeways through them, only louder.

## CHSRA Vetoes Viable Routes

According to Dan Leavitt of the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA), the public wants the 220 mph tracks right through the cities. We doubt this is really the case. Leavitt says focus groups held in the Central Valley indicated opposition to a new right-of-way, but this seems to show that the Authority did not inform them of the consequences. Leavitt also claims that it is difficult to acquire large land parcels, the precise opposite of state agencies' long experience. CHSRA decided to eliminate all route options in the Central Valley except two rather improbable ones: the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way beside Highway 99 or the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railway right-of-way used by the San Joaquins.

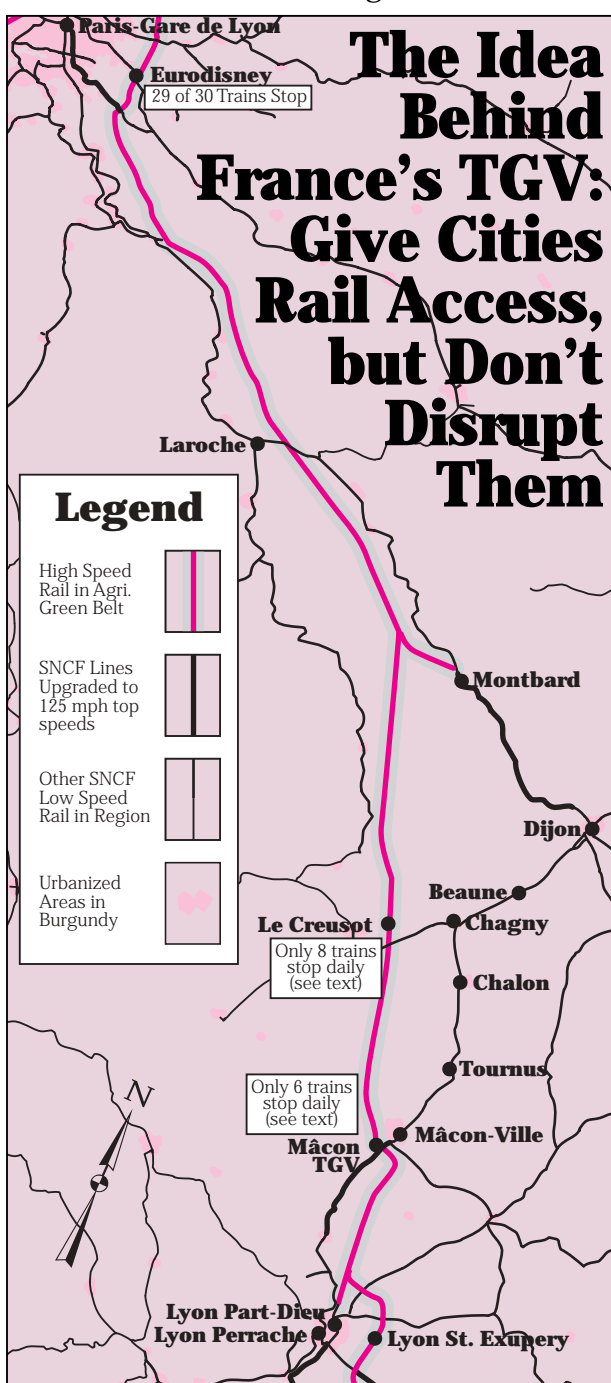
Either of these historic routes has more than enough physical constraints to keep high speed trains from ever being implemented. As Amtrak discovered to its chagrin with Acela, existing rail rights-of-way are highly toxic from past dumping and full of very costly obstacles.

Has CHSRA really thought this through? 100-foot wide railroad rights of way are a tight space to even add a light rail line with narrower loading gauge, as Sacramento's Regional Transit knows from its South Line. High speed rail needs more than half the 100-foot width just for the track and poles, even before considering security issues. A long and substantial crash barrier would have to be built to prevent a derailed freight train from the adjacent line from damaging the supports of a structure or falling into the path of a high speed train.

Virtually none of the existing railroad overpasses are wide enough to accommodate a new double track line next to the existing one. If the UP route were used, all overpasses all the way up and down Highway 99 would need to be rebuilt and all grade crossings removed

and rebuilt as grade separations for four tracks, with extra space between freight tracks and HSR.

Building through towns creates even more obstacles, and astronomical costs. Some buildings may have to be removed to accommodate the line. There would be massive demolition and earthmoving. This kind of disruption is as dumb as the idea of a new generation of urban



freeways. This would happen not just in one city but in every city and town between Stockton and Bakersfield. If any city sees this as a problem, Leavitt believes that the line could be undergrounded, like a statewide BART project.

## Is CHSRA Building "FART"?

Cities would have four track underground stations, according to Leavitt, two tracks for nonstop expresses and two for deceleration and station tracks. According to CHSRA speed profiles, expresses would go through the stations at 220 mph, and would therefore have to be physically separated from the other tracks, to prevent hearing loss in waiting passengers, and to prevent kids or seniors being swept off the platform by an express.

The idea of subway stations throughout the Valley, especially the CHSRA plan for a six-track underground station for Fresno, gives that old joke about "Fresno Area Rapid Transit" new currency. Except this time, they're serious!

Saying you are going to blast through the cities at 220 mph is an obvious way to create opposition and design problems. The CHSRA plan to use existing rights-of-way will produce one of two bad outcomes. Either you get:

- 1) a system that slows for every city and town and doesn't meet HSR standards—essentially a very long BART system, or

2) a plan so costly it will never be built—but studies of how to build the structures and trenches could be carried out for decades.

One wonders if number 2 is the true plan: perpetual planning and engineering contracts. TRAC aims to see this does not happen.

## Let's Use Europe's Experience

It's time for Valley leaders to firmly reject the persistent bad idea floated by CHSRA staff in planning circles: that 220 mph trains must use existing rail corridors. This emotional ploy ignores the purpose of the new line, to bypass the congestion and terminal slowness of the existing rail corridors, to allow rail to effectively compete with highway travel.

We all know that not every train can serve every city, so how about optimizing the CHSRA route plan to fit its business plan? First of all, let's take a look at schedules in CHSRA's 2000 Final Business Plan. The Plan proposes five service levels: express, semi-express, sub-urban-express, local and regional. Only 37 percent of through trains in this scenario stop in Fresno. It appears that even fewer, about 25 percent, stop in other Valley cities. A practical approach would keep these 100 trains a day that are only going to blitz through at 220 mph on a main line that avoids cities.

Dan McNamara, Vice President of TRAC, points out that the reason the French National Railway could build the original TGV line for \$7 million per mile was its design as a bypass to avoid city congestion. Burgundy's cities were spared the disruption of constructing the new rail line, and all the noise, but still got improved rail service, via TGV connections in Dijon and Lyon. "The French realized a new line was the only way to make 186 mph speeds, and also the only affordable route," said McNamara. "It doesn't take a genius to understand that the only way California's line will be affordable is if it is planned to run where it avoids known problems."

The French have found that high speed rail is very compatible with a variety of agricultural uses, including some of Burgundy's best Grand Cru Chablis vineyards and dairy farms. In the Central Valley, especially where land is being taken out of production or dry farmed because of mineral buildup, the impact of having adjacent nonstop rail service is relatively minimal. A Texas farming delegation which had been critical of a high speed line learned from their European compatriots that even cows ignore the trains after about a month or two.

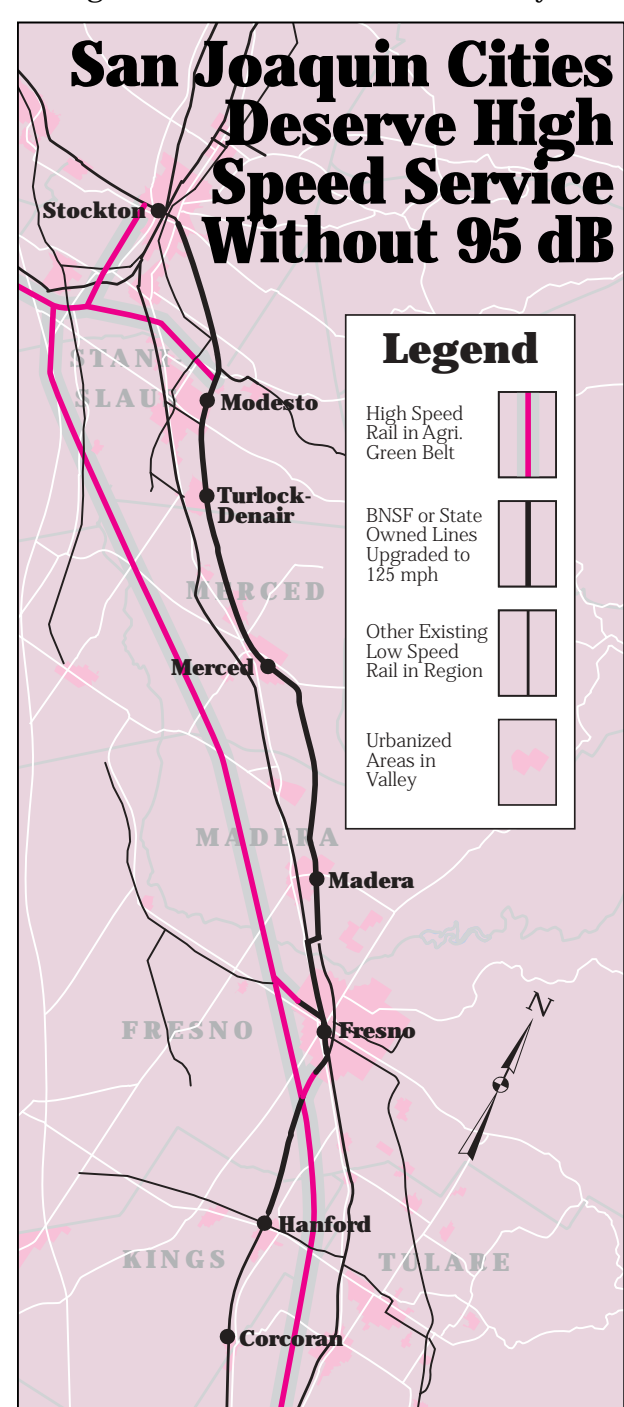
## Greenbelts-Not Greenfield Stops

Another myth floating around government circles is that high speed through agricultural lands would induce sprawl by creating 'greenfield' stations far outside city limits. The theory is that all stations would be built 10 miles from town in the middle of rich farmlands. Since people would want to live near the station, the reasoning goes, Valley cities would spread out with single family houses destroying farmland.

The legislation which creates high speed rail should include a land-use element which strictly forbids the building of stations along

the HSR mainline in perpetuity. Land adjacent to the main line is ideally suited as an agricultural preserve, and it is worthwhile to fund this preservation with a specific set-aside. This would produce a greenbelt to protect the line, isolate people from the sound envelope, and prevent sprawl. The mistake California made with building up to the edges of airports should not be repeated with HSR.

Lest anyone use the discussion on noise as evidence to oppose high speed rail in the Bay Area or LA Basin, a caution is required. The 95 decibel sound envelope is only created by air pressure when the trains are near top speed (over about 160 mph). At 125 mph, the maximum speed at which HSR trains will travel through the urban zones of LA or the Bay



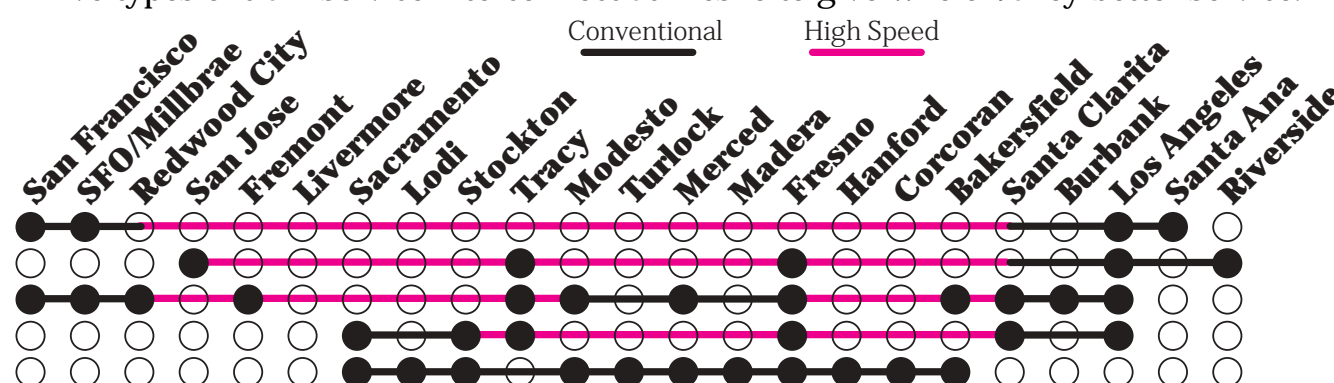
Area, HSR trains are actually quieter than a conventional passenger train at 80 mph or a freight train at 45 mph.

## Make Use of Rail Investments

High speed rail cannot live in a vacuum, and ignore the hundreds of millions of dollars Caltrans has invested in San Joaquin tracks.

## A Quieter Way to Connect Valley Cities

Five types of train service interconnect at Fresno to give whole Valley better service.



Unfortunately, CHSRA has not articulated a vision as to how conventional San Joaquin trains would connect with high speed rail.

The dot chart below shows one plausible way of integrating five north-south routes to provide high speed travel between Los Angeles, the Bay Area, and Sacramento, without neglecting or damaging Central Valley cities along the way.

San Joaquin conventional service will continue to play a major role in feeding passengers to the high speed rail system. We show this happening in two different ways: conventional trains meet HSR trains at common stations in major Valley cities, and HSR equipment itself runs on sections of the San Joaquin line. The final shape of the solution depends on a 'meeting of the minds' between the Federal Railroad Administration and equipment manufacturers over crashworthiness standards.

In either scenario, conventional rail will be brought up to FRA Class VII standards, allowing 125 mph operation. With 125 mph top speeds, and a Fresno midpoint hub, access times from San Joaquin stations to the nearest high speed transfer station would be a matter of minutes.

## Main Line & Downtown, Too

The right rail plan for Fresno, to spur city-core renewal, corporate investment, and a vital pedestrian-oriented core requires that it be the hub station of the network. Luckily, Fresno happens to have the right geography for this role.

In this scenario, about 80 trains daily would stop in Fresno at a new intermodal terminal at the former SP station to exchange passengers. Like a hub airport, this station would perform the function of connecting all major California cities without trains making too many intermediate stops. Most trains would zip past Fresno miles to the west at 220mph, stirring up a few aphids, but disturbing no humans.

The Fresno loop can be viewed as an interstate highway business loop. Just as drivers with business in the town can take the offramp, trains with passengers to transfer can take the loop. Several miles north of Fresno, southbound HSR trains would curve off the main line and join the planned joint Union Pacific / BNSF main line (see map left). After a brief stop, trains would accelerate back to 125 until outside the Fresno city limits, where they would regain 220 mph on the HSR main line to the south.

Fresno, as a midway connection point, allows Madera, Merced, Hanford and Corcoran easy high speed access. Similarly, branches of the high speed line would give Modesto, Stockton, Sacramento and Merced direct high speed service. The overall level of rail service to every Valley city would improve, without major negative impacts.

## Study Proper Alternatives

An environmental study of infeasible alternatives is inherently wasteful of time and financial resources. By moving ahead with environmental work while the project concept is still half-baked, the CHSRA has made a classic and fateful mistake that stands a good chance of setting California high speed rail back by another decade.

At this juncture, it is valuable to look at what caused CHSRA to get the alternatives so wrong. The most cogent explanation is that CHSRA's inadequate staff, lacking engineering or railroad experience, has been unable to control a contractor with dual conflicts of interest: bigger airport projects and bigger highway projects which both would be threatened by successful high speed rail.

## HIGH SPEED RAIL POLICIES

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TRAIN RIDERS ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA APRIL 2002

- California High-Speed Rail [CHSR] must be integrated and compatible with conventional passenger rail services and the equipment built to standards that allow this.
- CHSR network needs to be composed of portions of upgraded conventional routes plus the High-Speed Rail [HSR] main line. The upgraded segments must be part of the overall HSR plan and clearly stated as part of the HSR initiative. HSR operation on these segments should be in cooperation with conventional rail agencies that will also benefit from the upgrades.
- 200mph+ service must be achieved over the vast majority of the route (Santa Clarita to Redwood City via Altamont or Santa Clarita to just-outside San Jose for other routes). This is necessary to obtain a 2 1/2 hour San Francisco-Los Angeles travel time, financial feasibility and congestion relief.
- The Central Valley HSR mainline must be capable of sustained 220mph operation and built west of Highway 99 well outside of urban areas.
- 200mph+ service creates sound envelopes incompatible with urban areas. 200mph+ main-line right-of-way CANNOT pass through populated areas. Trains that serve major Central Valley cities need to diverge from the HSR mainline on parallel connector tracks that serve downtown stations.
- The HSR legislation must include the following strict land-use restrictions:
  - No stops on the 220mph mainline.
  - Stops only in center-cities on diverging city 'local routes'.
  - Land along the HSR mainline will retain permanent agricultural green belt zoning.
- Support the CHSR Authority plan to start HSR at Irvine (south end) to serve Orange County and to build the LA-San Diego HSR route inland via Riverside and Escondido.
- The HSR mainline southern mountain crossing should be via the direct Bakersfield-LA 'Grapevine' route in the proximity of I-5.
- Monies for the overall CHSR project should include funds for an upgraded line from Santa Clarita to Palmdale that would meet HSR specifications and thus allow for extension of the line to Bakersfield or Las Vegas.
- The CHSR Authority should consider service to the Sacramento Stockton-Modesto area in the initial phase of HSR and select the Bay Area-Central Valley alignment that serves these cities best.
- The CHSR Authority must select the most cost-effective and versatile route for a San Francisco Bay Area to Central Valley crossing and re-examine the Altamont/Hetch-Hetchy alignment as a candidate route.
- If the CHSR Authority selects a Central Valley to Bay Area alignment via Panoche, Pacheco, or 'Diablo Range' routes then it must include crossing San Francisco Bay at San Francisco to serve the population of the East Bay and the I-80 corridor and upgrade the Capitol Corridor to HSR standards to Sacramento.
- Both San Jose and San Francisco require their own direct express service to Los Angeles. San Jose is best served by a route plan that makes it a northern California terminal on an equal footing with San Francisco and Sacramento.
- CHSR should not be built as a typical public works project, but put to competitive bids as a turnkey project to design/build/operate consortiums with a history of HSR success. These could be private-public partnerships.

# The Fix Is In

## MTC Pushes Ahead with Controversial East Span Fix Which Excludes Rail as U.C. Structural Expert Challenges Caltrans to Prove New Bridge Can Survive a Car Bomb



by Robert Freehling

Employing high-security procedures and armed agents, Gov. Davis held a groundbreaking and campaign event January 29 to start constructing a replacement East Span for the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge.

The single-tower, self-anchored asymmetrical suspension span, a part of one of the nation's most important bridges, will not receive the same security protection, according to Bay television station KTVU Channel 2. KTVU reported that the bridge is uniquely vulnerable to a small terrorist bomb.

Though warned repeatedly by a University of California expert on structural safety, Caltrans says it never looked into the matter. This security lapse may trigger an investigation by the US Congress' General Accounting Office (GAO) for a bridge that has risen over 1000% from original repair cost estimates.

U.C. Berkeley Engineering Professor Abolhassan Astaneh, who was brought in by the federal government to analyze the World Trade Center collapse, says "Until bridge designers show that the bridge can tolerate a car bomb placed on it and exploded, they should not build it."

Professor Astaneh has harbored concerns about the stability of the new bridge design from the beginning. He says the reason he is going public with his bomb analysis is that federal and state officials have refused to examine the issue. "I presented to them my concerns, but they said we are only charged to look into seismic [concerns]," said Professor Astaneh.

According to a recent article in the UC Berkeley *Daily Californian*, Astaneh's relationship with Caltrans began in 1991 with grants to research seismic safety of the Bay Bridge. Caltrans provided \$50,000 after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake to study damage to the bridge, and later, \$500,000 to study safety retrofits. Caltrans terminated its grants in 1998 after he questioned the stability of the proposed bridge. "Caltrans does not accept dissent, but safety concerns should not be disregarded," Astaneh says.

Professor Astaneh, a widely respected structural expert, risks future state funding by speaking out. His viewpoint is that Gov. Gray Davis and Bay Area officials should demand that Caltrans engineers analyze the terrorist threat, and determine whether the new bridge will withstand any explosion at least as well as the current bridge.

The east span will include the first large self-anchored bridge; only two small ones in Asia exist. T.Y. Lin, the world-famous bridge designer, called the self-anchored design "a monument to ignorance," and said it lacks the stability of ordinary suspension bridges.

The roadway deck is to be put under 100 million pounds of compression with the cables pushing the tension forces inward at the deck ends like a tightly-wound spring. Computer analysis demonstrates that as little as 200 pounds of conventional explosives could upset the balance, buckle the road, and fold up the bridge catastrophically.

Ordinary suspension bridges, like the west span of the Bay Bridge and the Golden Gate Bridge, are robust because they consist of independent segments hung from the main cable. Bombs could damage an isolated segment but would not destroy the bridge.

Astaneh points out the irony that the existing east span is a robust design without any design weakness that could be exploited by terrorists, yet is being replaced by one that is vulnerable. Caltrans sources told KTVU its design would not be changed, while admitting Caltrans engineers never did any specific terror threat analysis.

A computer-based test can be conducted for only \$500,000 to verify whether the self-anchored bridge could withstand an explosion. Astaneh says if the tests provide any results suggesting the bridge would not withstand an explosion, this would be "the best \$500,000 they ever spent." He adds that such a test would look not only at potential terrorist attacks but even at the destructiveness of a burning fuel truck, which could cause the planned bridge to buckle.

But Caltrans spokesperson Colin Jones told the *Daily Cal* that the department is mainly concerned about the seismic stability of the bridge, and that testing for resistance to car bombs or explosions is unnecessary. "We've never had a history of a terrorist attack on the bridge," Jones said.

Jones said the bridge would conform to current codes and that California's Highway Patrol is trying to avoid explosions on the bridge by banning trucks carrying explosive materials. "Have other bridges and structures been studied for that?" Jones asks. "As far as I know, they haven't."

Gov. Davis' warning in November about possible attacks on California bridges proves that bridges are indeed at risk for terrorism. In the wake of September 11, key bridges like the Bay Bridge, used by 280,000 cars each day, should be designed to resist explosions even if today's codes do not explicitly require it. They were written years ago, long before the reality of terrorism had set in.

Security of transportation and other infrastructure is a growing concern. The FAA has been working to get more sturdy doors and bulkheads on aircraft, while Sandia Laboratories trains government agencies to make their structures more immune to terrorist attack. Last October, engineers from all

over the country met to consider how to make large structures more secure. Bridge designers in New York have already contacted a San Francisco firm that specializes in modeling structural failures. "It is ironic that people from New York are coming here to get expertise to see if bridges can withstand car bombs, but here in California the bridges are not being tested," Astaneh said.

According to the *Daily Cal*, Eve Hinman, president of the firm, says a test on the Bay Bridge would probably reveal it to be safer to connect the cables to anchorage blocks on land than a self-supported anchorage block. "I don't think the terrorist threat is being taken seriously in San Francisco," she says.

Plans for the controversial east span are allegedly finished, except for a few troublesome details. Construction officially began at the January ceremony. The critics were declared "silenced," and the first contract signed. All was going very quietly ahead. Yet, conspicuously missing from the ceremony was the Mayor of San Francisco, the city that holds up half of the Bay Bridge.

Also missing is the rail facility that San Francisco, Berkeley, Oakland, and Emeryville voters asked be studied, which could have given the bridge a purpose of expanded transbay mobility, instead of just replicating the existing gridlock on a new structure.

Another missing item was an agreement with Oakland for use of a multi-million dollar construction staging area. Caltrans decided to set up shop on the site without permission, leading to a lawsuit and direct action by the City and Port of Oakland to oust Caltrans from city property.

Caltrans officials and former Bay Bridge Task Force chair, Mary King, were outraged at the city's stance. After all, Caltrans had been negotiating before it just decided to grab the property. Specifically named in the suit is Caltrans director Jeff Morales. Capitol insiders say Morales has been under constant pressure by Governor Davis to advance the project. Until it receives payment, the City of Oakland has posted a lone unarmed guard to block Caltrans crews from starting work on the \$3 billion bridge.

### **MTC's Unbelievable Rail Costs**

Meanwhile, costs for Bay rail crossings ranging from \$10.3 to nearly \$12 billion were augured by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). Korve Engineering did the work using Parsons-Brinckerhoff as a subcontractor. MTC foresees a drilled tunnel instead of a tube, and wants a maximum grade of only 1.5%. Given the required depth to get to safely drillable soil, this means the line is in tunnel miles from the bay.

MTC claims a new 4-mile BART subway from San Francisco to Oakland costs \$10.3 billion. A 4-mile train tunnel for commuter trains or high-speed rail is priced at \$11.8 billion. For comparison, this is more than France has spent for 800 miles of high speed rail lines. It is also more than the longest rail tunnel ever built, Japan's 33-mile undersea Honshu-Hokkaido tunnel, which is three stories high and 800 feet deep, and took over 20 years to build, yet cost only \$7 billion.

Understandably, MTC's press spin was to try to counter disbelief by experts and public alike. "At first blush, it seems like a lot, and people are going to do a double-take," said Randy Rentschler, spokesman for MTC. "But if you take that second look, you realize that these are major improvements, and they're going to carry a big price tag." Some who have taken that second look disbelieve MTC's price figure even more.

George Haikalis, a civil engineer and transportation planner, as well as former Director of Research for the New York area's Tri-State Regional Planning Commission says "MTC's \$10.3 billion seems unrealistically high." He points out that the present BART tube was built for only \$180 million in 1970. Assuming that MTC allows consideration of a reasonable design, many experts believe a tube could be built for under \$2 billion.

## U.P.'S THREAT TO SACRAMENTO DEPOT

# U.P. Breaks Deal, Says It Will Move Tracks



A year ago, Sacramento transit activists and historic preservation groups were fairly confident that they had achieved a victory which would save the historic Sacramento SP Depot. A negotiating team including Union Pacific and citizens hammered out an agreement, endorsed by the City Council May 22, 2001, that would keep the station as the hub of a transit terminal with not only Amtrak, but a Regional Transit light rail line, commuter rail service and buses. The next step was to be a full environmental study of the terminal, leading to funding and construction of an expanded multimodal facility.

That was before Union Pacific, which signed on to the agreement, unilaterally pulled out. UP declared in March that despite the agreement, it would move its mainline tracks. UP also let it be known it expected public agencies to build a new station serving the relocated tracks on partially remediated toxic land in the SP yards.

Even before the UP announcement, Sacramento officials were upset at the railroad. Ever since 1996, Union Pacific had been promising to finally fix the roof on the National Registry site depot and add a temporary roof on the collapsed Railway Express Agency building, which matches station facades but is in a worse state of decay. UP dragged its heels until mid-January, then suddenly said it would fix the REA roof. Five months later, the railroad still had not completed for the city permits to do so.

City staff finally did begin environmental work to purchase the station to save it, but refused to include the platforms, subways and tracks. "Without acquiring more land," the Save Our Rail Depot (SORD) citizens group commented in a recent letter, the City could not "ensure the continued public transit functions at the site" (the purpose of the purchase). "The goals of the 2002 project cannot be met if the rail station has no publicly owned or controlled tracks. Acquiring four acres...does not assure that the city would have tracks at its improved station, given the intent of the Union Pacific Railroad to move tracks away from the Depot. We recommend that the city acquire 37 acres along with the Depot and the REA Building thus assuring a return on its investment. In San Jose and Portland passenger tracks [and] depots are in public ownership."

The citizen group also found fault with the City's use of a superceded 9-year-old plan, the Railyards Specific Plan Richards Boulevard Area Plan (Sacramento, 1993). "That plan included constructing a new intermodal station at 7th and North B, a concept that has been rejected by the current

**Beirut?, Hebron? No, it's Sacramento! The Railway Express Agency building has been the subject of angry debates at City Hall, but is Union Pacific just using the REA building as a stalking horse for what could happen to the SP Depot?**

City Council (Resolution 2001-313, May 22, 2001) which considers the Historic Depot as "the grand pedestrian gateway and core facility for the Intermodal Station." SORD rejects use of the old plan, since it would thwart proper environmental reviews.

The dominant view in Sacramento is that UP really just wants to remove the station and does not care about a multimodal terminal. Even City staffers who worked with the railroad to try to obtain a plan acceptable to the public now seem to believe that the railroad has a land development agenda, not a rail agenda for the site. Certainly, all possible actions have been taken to impair passenger access to the site, and UP's melodramatic flair in letting the roof cave in on the REA building reminds one of a classic villain.

Another revealing alternate view of the project comes from websites that publicize Philip Anschutz's activities. Anschutz, by some accounts the unseen hand in UP land deals, is the biggest UP shareholder. The Anschutz Company is also the largest shareholder of common stock of Qwest.

Tsewq, a website run by shareholders, is critical of actions that boosted the perceived value of Qwest assets. Suspicious minds may connect this business model to an entire career. Anschutz parlayed assets of tiny Rio Grande into a leveraged buyout of SP, then to UP's huge real estate holdings by actions that created a prospect of future earnings. Qwest's takeover of US West was a similar guppy-eats-the-whale junk bond purchase.

The SEC is digging into Qwest's books for misstating exchanges of fiber optic line capacity as earnings, following the collapse of Global Crossing, its trading partner. With the Feds watching, Qwest can't play that game, and big losses in current accounts may boost its finance costs. Its stock went from \$64.50 to \$4.86 in just two years.

The message for Sacramento officials is to retain some caution and look out for the city's interests. The land UP wants to develop is highly toxic, and the quality of its remediation has not been properly studied by independent experts. Sacramento city officials still may end up doing the right thing, but now appear headed toward short-sighted land use decisions that would sacrifice city transportation goals and historic structures to help out a corporate raider.

## BART Livermore Extension Won't Help I-580 Delays

The I-580 Corridor Study looks at options for extending Bay Area Rapid Transit service 10.5 miles from Dublin to Livermore or bus service, but will not consider upgrades of Altamont Commuter Express (ACE), in the same corridor. The study, overseen by the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (ACCMA), is coming up with some discouraging conclusions on BART's ability to solve traffic congestion on snarled Interstate 580.

Two BART options, two diesel light rail options (called tBART) and an express bus option are being studied. One BART and tBART option use the I-580 median through Livermore. Two others diverge from I-580 to parallel Union Pacific's line through downtown Livermore.

At the March 8 meeting, CMA members confirmed that vocal opposition to changing the "character" of downtown Livermore meant that the tBART and BART downtown options will probably be dropped from study.

Fewer than 4,000 new riders would be attracted by BART extensions costing \$700 million to \$1.2 billion. Projected travel over Altamont in 2020 is 95,000 daily trips and from the Livermore Tri-Valley area 256,000, but consultants disclosed that 70% of trips cannot reasonably be served by BART or express buses. Traffic reduction on I-580 from the extension would be about 1.4%. The BART consultant cautioned that this value could be off since the numbers are so small they are at the edge of the model's ability to measure them.

By comparison, a recent study by the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) showed that 27,500 riders would climb aboard a fully upgraded ACE service. TRAC's request that ACE be considered as part of the I-580 study was not accepted, but it still appears to be the best option.

- For a small fraction of the proposed \$1 billion BART extension cost, ACE could be upgraded to multiple trains per hour, parking at Dublin BART station could be doubled and a "transfer only" station built in Fremont linking BART, Capitols, ACE and Dumbarton Rail trains.
- Cost per new BART Livermore trip is \$90 to \$110 compared to \$10 to \$15 for each new ACE trip.
- BART extension would require an operating subsidy of \$18 million per year. This is equivalent to 12 years of Alameda County's subsidy of ACE.

BART is understandably intimidated by ACE's success in the corridor, since its East Dublin-Pleasanton line is by all accounts the "Achilles Heel" of the network, carrying less than half the traffic of Sacramento's trolleys. That's not a very good performance for a line that runs in the median of Interstate 580, but the area does suffer from an extremely dispersed travel habit.

Some observers have hinted that the BART East Dublin-Pleasanton line may lose some service, or be combined with other trains if revenue shortfalls continue. A renowned New York rail planner believes the best thing for BART to do with the line is sell it to the state as a higher speed Oakland-San Joaquin route.

He points out that the line underutilizes the valuable time slots it is given in the Transbay tube, and is a white elephant for BART, but for the state rail network is a key missing piece of the puzzle. Amtrak lacks a fast, direct route to the Central Valley, and the East Dublin-Pleasanton line could be at least part of the solution.

**Thanks to TRAC Board Member Vaughn Wolfe for tracking the I-580 study.**

# Tunnel Vision at High Speed Rail

## LINE AIMS AT STATE PARK INSTEAD OF ALTAMONT PASS

**Is tunneling through 4 major mountain ridges east of San Jose a reasonable way for a new rail line to reach the Bay Area? The High Speed Rail Authority, although it lacks in-house engineering staff, has proposed a new and questionable route that could add a dozen miles of tunnel and over \$1.5 billion to the project cost. They call it, appropriately, "Diablo." The following is from TRAC's letter to CHSRA on the issue, sent April 12 by President Richard Tolmach.**

The TRAC Board has reviewed CHSRA's latest selections of alternatives to be carried through the EIR process. We have also heard from industry experts and environmental groups who are concerned about removal of the Altamont route and inclusion of the Diablo Range route (tunneling close to Henry Coe State Park) in the study.

Now that MTC's Bay Crossing Study has priced a 4 mile transbay tube at \$11.8 billion, similar to the cost of your entire 350 mile San Francisco-Los Angeles route, you can no longer pretend that the Capital Corridor is any sort of viable or cost-effective alternative for handling the overloaded Sacramento-San Francisco travel corridor.

CHSRA must retain a routing like Altamont which will serve San Francisco-Sacramento effectively. We strongly urge you to put Altamont alternatives back into the project and carry them through the EIR process. The remaining alternatives in the study, Diablo Range and Pacheco, are clearly incapable of diverting significant Interstate 80 travel because they are so indirect.

The Diablo crossing, your newly preferred alternative replacing Altamont, would have San Francisco to Sacramento trains traveling to Atwater, California 130 miles mostly out of direction before they turn towards Sacramento and run for another 115 miles. This idea looks like no engineer was ever involved in its development. Sacramento is only 80 miles from San Francisco. Diablo, at 245 miles and 2 hours travel time, turns high speed rail into an energy-wasting non-starter in the Bay Area-Sacramento market.

Your own published data shows that Altamont clearly beats autos with travel times of an hour or less in all the following markets:

- San Francisco-Sacramento
- SFO-Sacramento
- San Jose-Sacramento
- San Francisco-Stockton
- SFO-Stockton
- San Jose-Stockton
- San Francisco-Modesto
- SFO-Modesto
- San Jose-Modesto

Diablo is slower in every single one of these markets, as well as costing billions more.

The adoption of this flawed routing as the preferred alternative makes us worry that the environmental groups we have courted for most of the past decade on the high speed rail issue will turn permanently against the project. We have received three very strong communications from environmental leaders since your announcement of the Diablo alternative, one of which raised a very disturbing scenario. According to that scenario, your engineering consulting firm is using Henry Coe State Park as a hostage on the

San Jose-Central Valley segment, attempting to use environmental opposition as an excuse to increase the amount of tunneling. Unfortunately, the ramifications have not been lost on these groups, who have read about past practices of aiming tunnels at fault zones, the La Brea Tar Pits, or fiber optic lines. The message we are getting back is that they have no intention of becoming the scapegoats for what they view as a flawed and manipulative plan:

- 1) The environmental groups view your Diablo Range alignment as an invasion of the Bay Area's last wilderness area, whether or not the line touches the surface of the fraction of wilderness currently inside park boundaries, so tunneling, which is not without its own environmental problems, does not help at all.
- 2) There is a perception that you are not in control of the engineering firm so much as it is directing your actions and rhetoric on the issue of Diablo. While no one is drawing a time line or making any conclusions about prior interactions with the firm, your stance is not helping your image as a leader capable of brokering an alternatives process that leads to consensus.

We are telling you about the above issues because we want your project to succeed politically and technologically. There is every reason that high speed rail must be relevant to San Francisco, the South Bay and East Bay's regional travel needs and provide congestion relief along Interstates 80, 580 and 680. Northern Californians stuck in gridlock are not going to vote for a plan that ignores their needs and focuses only on 400 mile trips or travel to Central Valley destinations

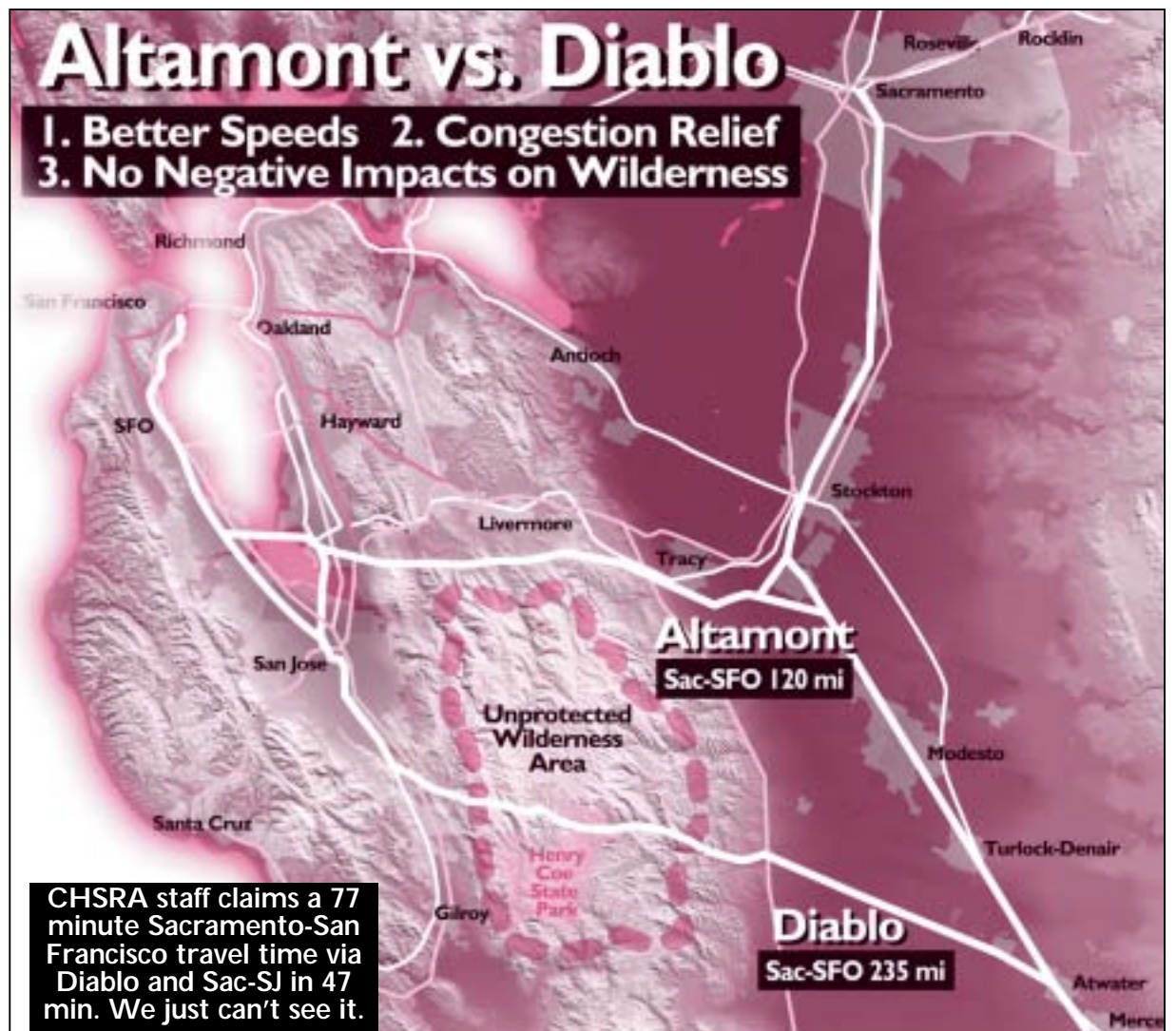
most Bay Area residents never willingly visit. The present preferred alternative does virtually nothing to help congestion.

San Jose is best served by a route plan which makes it a Northern California terminal on an equal footing with San Francisco and Sacramento, not a way station. Your idea that this puts San Jose on a "branch line" is wrong and implies that San Jose deserves or would receive less service. Your present preferred alternative would force dozens of San Francisco-Los Angeles expresses to blast through Diridon Station at top Peninsula speeds, and relegate San Jose passengers to hunting for left over seats on stopping trains.

Your present preferred alternative is as bad for San Jose as it is for all the other cities up and down the Peninsula who would be subjected to 172 additional trains a day. The European advice is that high speed rail should use Caltrain tracks the very minimum possible to avoid delays.

To us this means San Jose expresses would begin at Diridon Station, stop at Mineta International Airport and stop next in the Central Valley, making San Jose's airport the closest to Valley cities. San Francisco expresses would head for the Central Valley after a total of two stops at SFO and mid-Peninsula. This configuration would spare the rest of the Bay Area the environmental effects of trains which could not stop for local residents anyway.

We respectfully ask you to consider the above information and open the study to all feasible alternatives as required by California and Federal environmental law.



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