



9/25/2008

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## *News Release*

### **City of Menlo Park NEWS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

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#### **Menlo Park Council passes resolution opposing Proposition 1A**

MENLO PARK, CA – On Tuesday, the Menlo Park City Council voted to approve a resolution officially opposing Proposition 1A. Proposition 1A, a November ballot measure, would authorize the sale of \$9.95 billion in general obligation bonds to provide initial funding for High Speed Rail (HSR) service between San Francisco and Southern California. The vote was 3-1, with Council Members Heyward Robinson, Richard Cline, and Kelly Fergusson voting yes and Council Member John Boyle voting no. Mayor Andy Cohen was recused due to the proximity of his residence to the rail line.

Council members voting in favor of the resolution say they did so because issues raised by the City of Menlo Park were not adequately addressed in the Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). “We understand the potential benefits of High Speed Rail, but we want to ensure that the project is done right. The project sponsor has repeatedly failed to address issues of critical concern about the project’s impacts on the City of Menlo Park,” said Richard Cline. Council Member Fergusson added “Menlo Park supports projects improving intercity connectivity, but we are concerned that the \$40 billion-plus price tag for this proposal could balloon to a much higher cost preventing California from addressing other pressing needs in education, regional transportation, and local infrastructure.”

Vice Mayor Heyward Robinson stated: “Alternatives to Proposition 1A should be considered, including terminating the high speed train in San Jose and connecting into a regional Caltrain/BART/Bus network. This is the model used in Europe, where terminals for high speed trains are placed on the outskirts of metropolitan areas. By using this design, we can save billions of dollars, significantly reduce local impacts and still provide fast, reliable north-south rail connectivity.”

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Tuesday's vote is consistent with previous actions by the city in responding to the High Speed Rail Program Environmental Impact Report.

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RESOLUTION NO. 5826

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MENLO PARK  
COMMENTING ON THE CALIFORNIA HIGH SPEED RAIL SYSTEM  
AND PROPOSITION 1A (SAFE, RELIABLE, HIGH-SPEED PASSENGER TRAIN  
BOND ACT) ON THE NOVEMBER 2008 BALLOT

**WHEREAS**, the California High Speed Rail Authority was established by the Legislature in 1996 for implementing a statewide high speed train system for California; and,

**WHEREAS**, it is the intent of the State Legislature and the High Speed Rail Authority that a statewide ballot measure (Proposition 1A) to authorize bonds that would fund the project through design and the first stages of construction go to the voters in November of 2008; and,

**WHEREAS**, the California High Speed Rail Authority has certified a Program Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed California High Speed Rail Project; and,

**WHEREAS**, as proposed, the high speed rail line would pass through Menlo Park in the Caltrain corridor, the project would expand the Caltrain line to four tracks, electrify the line, grade separate all crossings, and the Authority would perform more specific environmental impact analysis for segments of the rail line and the stations should the high speed train advance to subsequent phases of project development.

**WHEREAS**, the Menlo Park City Council has an obligation to ensure that any modifications to the rail corridor within the City of Menlo Park are designed and constructed in such a way to minimize any impacts on traffic, property values, noise levels, trees, commercial businesses, aesthetics, and overall quality of life; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Menlo Park has previously submitted comments and a Council Resolution on potential impacts in Menlo Park to the draft PEIR/EIS the earliest of which dates to 2004.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the City Council of the City of Menlo Park that:

1. The project sponsor has repeatedly failed to address issues of critical concern to Menlo Park at this stage of the project development in order to assure that these issues will be addressed in some depth in subsequent project-level environmental documentation.

2. The fact that the project is being taken to the voters of the state for funding approval on the basis of the Program EIR/EIS document tends to deprive the public of full disclosure of the program's environmental impacts. The opinions of the voters in communities like Menlo Park, that are to be traversed by and likely to be significantly impacted by the high speed rail project, would be more heavily influenced by the details of local impacts of the project that are not adequately

addressed in the Program EIR/EIS than by the information on statewide travel needs and impacts that the Program EIR/EIS focuses on.

3. The Program EIR/EIS is so general it does not provide adequate information regarding the impacts on right-of-way, noise, historic buildings, trees, businesses, aesthetics and local traffic circulation.

4. Funding an approximately \$40 billion plus project (excluding land acquisition) in part with state general obligation bonds seems inappropriate at a time when the State General Fund is in a shortfall condition that is already adversely impacting local governments, schools and regional transportation funding.

5. Menlo Park expresses its strong desire for exploring alternate routes and/or methods to avoid the Peninsula area as the alignment for the high speed rail line, i.e. by integrating it with existing systems such as BART in the East Bay or Caltrain in San Jose. This integration with existing systems would still provide high speed rail service along the Peninsula and would reduce impacts and the overall cost of the project.

6. The City of Menlo Park does not wish to be in opposition to the Statewide High-Speed Rail Project. However, until the potentially critical local impacts described above are carefully worked out through the design process and evaluated in a project-level EIR/EIS, and until a financing plan that does not compound the difficulties facing local government is developed, Menlo Park cannot declare itself in support of the Project.

7. For the reasons outlined above, Menlo Park opposes Proposition 1A on the November 4, 2008 ballot.

I, Margaret S. Roberts, City Clerk of the City of Menlo Park, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing Resolution was duly and regularly passed and adopted at a meeting held by said Council of the City of Menlo Park on September 23, 2008, by the following vote:

Ayes: Councilmembers Cline, Fergusson, and Robinson.  
Noes: Councilmember Boyle.  
Abstain: None.  
Absent: Councilmember Cohen

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Official Seal of the City of Menlo Park, this twenty-third day of September, 2008.

/s/  
Margaret S. Roberts, MMC  
City Clerk