



The
City
Project



LA CONSERVATION CORPS



THE EARTH'S BEST DEFENSE



The RIVER
PROJECT



September 20, 2010

California High-Speed Rail Authority (“HSRA”)
925 L Street, Suite 1425
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Concerns Regarding High-Speed Rail Through Downtown Los Angeles

Dear Chairman Pringle and Members of the Board:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, which represent a broad, multicultural and economically diverse group of community, environmental, civil rights and civic leaders, we write to express several concerns regarding the proposed high-speed rail (“HSR”) line through downtown Los Angeles.

The proposed rail line must provide benefits for all. The rail line must not be allowed to adversely impact the two important urban state parks north of Union Station – Los Angeles State Historic Park and Rio de Los Angeles State Park – or the communities surrounding them and the Los Angeles River, or interfere with restoration and revitalization of the River.

Any proposed route for HSR must comply with basic principles and laws that protect the environment, human health, equal justice and democratic participation, including principles and laws governing recipients of federal financial assistance. Our shared values include investing in people and stronger communities; improving physical, psychological and social health for all communities, including people of color, low income people, and at-risk youth, through equal access to parks and green space; achieving conservation benefits, including climate justice, clean land, water and air, and habitat protection; and protecting Native American values and sacred sites.

For these reasons, we support the “long tunnel option,” in which a bored tunnel would run beneath the Los Angeles State Historic Park, Rio de Los Angeles State Park, and the River, avoid adverse impacts to each of those places and the surrounding communities, and emerge near the 2 Freeway. This alternative is described generally in the July 8, 2010, letter from Los Angeles City Councilmember Ed Reyes to HSRA, which is attached for your reference.

Los Angeles State Historic Park and Rio de Los Angeles State Park are innovative urban parks that serve low-income, park-poor communities that fought for equal access to parks and green space compared to other neighborhoods throughout Los Angeles. Los Angeles State Historic Park revives the forgotten history of Los Angeles from Native American times to the present, and cradles historic artifacts under its surface. We strongly oppose any route that would use cut-and-cover construction to create tunnels either through or immediately next to this Park, which would endanger important archeological resources and hinder public access to the park.

Rio de Los Angeles State Park features cutting-edge wetlands restoration, much-needed athletic fields and community activities. We strongly oppose any route that would adversely affect this Park or the surrounding communities. For instance, a trench along San Fernando Road that would permanently impede access to this Park, take a significant portion of land from the parking area and sports fields, and maroon the park between two rail lines is unacceptable. Neither would we support an at-grade or elevated route along the existing Metrolink corridor that would permanently interfere with access to the River or create potential impacts to avifauna and other wildlife. That alignment might provide a more acceptable solution if all of the tracks, including those for HSR, Metrolink and Amtrak, were brought down into a covered trench. This would minimize impacts to local residents and students at LAUSD’s Central Region High School #13, while providing an opportunity to create a land bridge connecting the park to the parcel known as G-2, creating a seamless link to the River.

Our concerns also extend to a number of other issues around HSR. For example, critical water resources must be protected. Proposed alignments should provide a minimum 200’ buffer from all watercourses, and any viaduct crossings over a watercourse should be designed to accommodate recreational access and potential future channel modifications for restoration of natural hydrodynamic processes. Other concerns include, but are not limited to, HSR’s potential impacts on the historic Sixth Street Bridge over the River; HSR’s riverbank alignment south of Union Station; the site and height of any proposed riverfront terminal for HSR; and potential impacts to wetlands and groundwater recharge along the L.A. to Palmdale segment.

In addition, HSR must take into account principles of equitable infrastructure development. For example, HSRA should ensure that the people who live in the local community get the job opportunities that accompany the investment, and provide maximum practicable opportunities for small businesses and disadvantaged business enterprises, which play a critical role in stimulating economic growth and creating jobs. HSRA should make effective use of community-based organizations in connecting disadvantaged people with economic opportunities. Everyone should have the chance to share in the opportunities created by HSR.

It is important that HSR be done right. Thank you for considering our comments. We appreciate your staff's efforts thus far to listen to our concerns and ideas, and would welcome additional meetings and briefings in the future to discuss in more detail these very important issues.

Very truly yours,

Raul Macias
Founder and Executive Director
Anahuak Youth Sports Association

Sara Feldman
Vice President for Programs
California State Parks Foundation

Robert García
Executive Director and Counsel
The City Project

Lewis MacAdams
President
Friends of the Los Angeles River

Bruce Saito
Executive Director
Los Angeles Conservation Corps

Joel Reynolds
Senior Attorney
Director, Urban Program
Natural Resources Defense Council

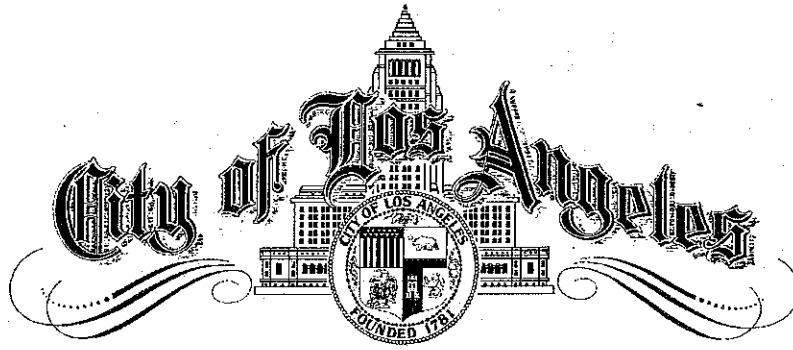
Melanie Winter
Director
The River Project

Miguel Luna
Executive Director
Urban Semillas

Attachment

cc: Mr. Roelof van Ark, CEO, HSRA
Mr. Andrew Althorp, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Mr. Dan Tempelis, Hatch Mott MacDonald
Mr. C. Michael Gillam, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Mr. Dave Thomson, STV Incorporated
Ms. Valerie Martinez, HSRA

200 N. SPRING STREET
CITY HALL, ROOM 410,
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012
(213) 485-3451 PHONE
(213) 485-8907 FAX



DISTRICT OFFICE
163 S. AVE. 24
ROOM 202
LOS ANGELES, CA 90031
(213) 485-0763 PHONE
(213) 485-8908 FAX

ED P. REYES
Councilmember, First District

July 8, 2010

California High Speed Rail Authority
925 L Street, Suite 1425
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: ITEM 10, PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS PRELIMINARY
REPORT – PALMDALE TO LOS ANGELES

Dear Honorable Members of the Board,

I would like to take this opportunity to comment on the Preliminary Alternatives Analysis Preliminary Report for the Los Angeles to Palmdale alignment of the high speed rail. These are initial reactions to the report as it has only been made publicly available since this morning and I would like to provide more in depth feedback as you and your staff further study and refine these proposed alignments.

First, I do believe the High Speed Rail Authority has made progress in studying both an at grade alignment from Union Station in addition to the aerial alignments that were previously on the table. I can appreciate the many constraints in and around downtown Los Angeles and I believe it is an important step to be considering multiple approaches in and out of Union Station. There are many sensitive uses to consider in this area including, but not limited to, the Los Angeles State Historic Park, Rio de Los Angeles State Park, the Los Angeles River, as well as the many homes and businesses along the proposed route. I continue to pursue win-win alternatives where this vast investment in new infrastructure for high speed rail can serve multiple benefits for downtown and the surrounding region. Where this is not possible mitigation will be imperative and I would like to work with your staff to develop a range of measures that will maintain the important urban fabric of downtown Los Angeles and my district.

Specifically, I would also request that the 'long tunnel option' in which the proposed tunnel from downtown would extend north to the 2 freeway be put back into the Alternatives Analysis for further study and review. The current alignments along San Fernando Road and Rio de Los Angeles State Park are insufficient to provide meaningful alternatives analysis review. I would also request that interaction and feedback from the

Army Corps of Engineers within this segment not be limited to their permitting authority but also be conducted in collaboration with the Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study currently funded by the federal government and underway by the Corps in which the City of Los Angeles is the local sponsor.

I would like to thank you for conducting your board meeting here in Los Angeles. I look forward to continued dialogue and transparency and we continue through this process. I believe downtown Los Angeles can and should be a model for a world class rail system that includes high speed rail in California.

Sincerely,



ED P. REYES

Councilmember, First District

cc: Congressmember Lucille Roybal-Allard
Congressmember Xavier Becerra
Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, City of Los Angeles
Mark Toy, Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District Commander