CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW
MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 9, 2010

TO: City Council

FROM: Randal Tsuda, Community Development Director
Michael A. Fuller, Public Works Director

SUBJECT: SEPTEMBER 13, 2010 STUDY SESSION—HIGH-SPEED RAIL STATION

PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Study Session is as follows:

1. To provide an opportunity for California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) staff to present information to the City Council about a possible high-speed rail (HSR) station in Mountain View; and

2. To obtain input from Council on issues that require further analysis, if any, to assist the Council in determining if Mountain View should continue to be considered as a location for a high-speed rail station.

Downtown Mountain View is one of three locations under consideration by the CHSRA for a mid-Peninsula high-speed rail station. The other two locations are Redwood City and Palo Alto. In July 2010, the CHSRA released limited information about the requirements for a station and wanted an opportunity to present information to each community and gain public feedback. This Study Session will allow the CHSRA to present information, answer questions from the City Council and gain feedback from the Council and the public. Council may also wish to direct staff to further study the implications of a high-speed rail station in Mountain View.

BACKGROUND

During January and February 2009, as part of the environmental clearance process, the CHSRA held public meetings and requested comments on the environmental impacts that should be studied in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the San Francisco to San Jose portion of the high-speed rail project. In the initial scope, Palo Alto and Redwood City were identified as possible mid-Peninsula stations. The City Council discussed the scoping comments and the possibility of a mid-Peninsula station at two City Council meetings in February 2009.

While the City Council did not endorse the idea of a Mountain View station, most Councilmembers considered the idea worth studying. The City's March 20, 2009 comment letter included a request that the CHSRA also study Mountain View as a possible location for the mid-Peninsula station.

In April 2010, the CHSRA released the Preliminary Alternatives Analysis (PAA) for the San Jose to San Francisco segment, and the PAA included Mountain View as a possible mid-Peninsula stop along with Palo Alto and Redwood City.

On July 20, 2010, the CHSRA held a meeting with City staff and the Mayor to provide preliminary information about a high-speed rail station in Mountain View. The information available to date includes:

- Minimum station building size: 67,000 square feet.
- HSR platform length: 1,380' (approximately twice as long as existing Caltrain platform).
- Required HSR parking spaces at the station: 1,000 spaces.
- Additional off-site HSR parking within three miles: 2,000 spaces.
- Boardings/Alightings: 15,600 daily riders (arriving and departing).
- Traffic: See discussion below.

DISCUSSION

The CHSRA has provided limited information to staff on a potential Mountain View high-speed rail station, and to date there have been no additional or specific studies on a Mountain View station that have been made available for review.

To help Council frame the discussion of the potential merits of a potential downtown HSR station in Mountain View, the following key question may be helpful:

- Is a new HSR downtown station part of the vision for the future of downtown and the City?

The following sections include an overview of several key topical areas at a very broad, high level and some context to the limited information provided to date by the CHSRA.

General Plan Update

To date, the General Plan update process has not focused on the potential of a HSR station in downtown Mountain View, primarily due to the lack of details on station requirements.

However, during the General Plan update process, the community has expressed the following input regarding the future of the downtown area:

- ***An area of stability***—The downtown area has not been identified as a General Plan "change area." It is an area of stability where no major land use or policy changes are proposed.

- ***Support for current downtown direction***—The Downtown Precise Plan was last updated in 2004 and 2000, and community members expressed support for how these changes were being implemented in terms of land use and policy direction.

- ***Support for area enhancements***—Community members expressed support for potential enhancements to the downtown area. Some of these draft policy "enhancements" include continuing to promote downtown as a center for social, entertainment and cultural activity; increasing pedestrian and bicycle connections to downtown; and increasing the diversity of services downtown, such as attracting a new grocery store.

HSR Station Requirements and Operations

To help provide a context for understanding the size and scale of a new HSR station and its operations, staff has provided some local comparable examples below.

<u>Station Size</u>

As noted, a new HSR station building would be approximately 67,000 square feet. This building size would be similar in scale to the recently approved Daniel Minkoff office building at Evelyn Avenue and Bryant Street, which is 63,000 square feet.

Ridership

The CHSRA estimates a daily ridership of 7,800 boardings and 7,800 alightings at a new HSR station. The total daily riders for the station would, therefore. be approximately 15,600. This number is roughly equivalent to the 15,500 daily ridership totals at the San Francisco Caltrain station at Fourth Street and King Street. The current daily Caltrain ridership at the downtown Mountain View station is approximately 5,900 total boardings and alightings, which is projected to increase to 9,200 in 2035.

Parking

The HSR station would also require an additional 1,000 parking spaces within walking distance of the station. This number does not factor in replacement or expanded parking for the existing downtown Caltrain/VTA lot, where there are currently approximately 350 parking spaces. It is unclear at this time how many of these parking spaces would be impacted by a new station or how many would need to be replaced in addition to required CHSR parking.

As a point of comparison for how much space might be required for 1,000 new parking spaces, the downtown parking garage between Villa Street and Evelyn Avenue has 313 parking spaces, and the parking garage at California Street and Bryant Street has 405 parking spaces.

It is also unknown at this time if a new station and potentially additional parking would fit on the existing Joint Powers Board/City properties along Evelyn Avenue. To accommodate these new facilities, additional right-of-way may be needed from either Evelyn Avenue or Central Expressway.

In addition to downtown station parking space requirements, an additional 2,000 parking spaces would be required within a three-mile radius of the downtown station. The CHSRA has indicated that parking facilities are not included in the project. Possible scenarios include construction and operation of parking by a private operator or a public/private partnership.

Impacts and Benefits of a HSR Station

Staff has been working with CHSRA staff to obtain as much information as possible on the impacts and benefits of a new HSR station. The following is a brief overview of existing information and the potential impacts and benefits of a new HSR station.

Ridership and Traffic Volumes

The following chart lists CSHRA estimated ridership volumes:

Table 1: Ridership Volumes

	Boardings or Alightings
Auto Drop-off	2,200
Auto Park	2,400
Rental Cars	720
Taxis	680
Transit	800
Walk/Bike	1,000
Total for Boardings OR Alightings	7,800

The CHSRA has also noted that the total expected daily traffic from a downtown station would be between 8,440 and 8,480 trips. The CHSRA has also not evaluated the traffic impact to Mountain View's local roadway network. Additional traffic studies and analysis would be required to fully understand these potential impacts.

Economic Benefit

The CHSRA has provided staff with an article on the economic benefits of a HSR station, including how it would create additional jobs. However, the local benefits to Mountain View are not clear and have not been studied. For example, it is unknown at this time how many HSR passengers would dine or shop in downtown prior to entering the station. A HSR station is a transportation facility that is different than an airport terminal, where most dining or shopping occurs within the terminal. Staff would want to better understand how many additional diners or shoppers the downtown could expect from a HSR station.

A HSR station could provide some benefits to local companies in terms of additional business travel options and increased business exposure. However, similar benefits

could likely be obtained if a HSR station were to be built in another Peninsula city location.

MOVING FORWARD

If Council supports the further study of a new downtown Mountain View HSR station, then more detailed analysis of a station's potential impact and benefit to the community would be needed. Staff has identified the following consultant studies and approximate costs that would help with the City's analysis:

- Urban Design ($100,000)
- Economics ($50,000 to $75,000)
- Traffic ($25,000 to $50,000)

CONCLUSION

In sum, staff has obtained limited information from the CHSRA on the potential impacts and benefits of a new HSR station. Should Council support the idea to continue to study this topic, then staff recommends that Council authorize a total not to exceed $225,000 for additional consultant studies as outlined above. Staff would then return to Council with this additional information and analysis regarding the potential impacts and benefits of a downtown Mountain View HRS station.

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