

## California High-Speed Rail Authority Releases New Business Plan Addressing Phase 1 Construction and Initial Operation of High-Speed Trains — and Plans for Phase 2 Begin to Take Shape

The California High-Speed Rail Authority released its new Business Plan on November 1, 2011 identifying a clear path to the funding, construction and operation of the first phase of a statewide high-speed train system to benefit all Californians. The new Business Plan recognizes recent economic realities and provides a plan for success in light of potential funding constraints not anticipated in previous years. The Authority has made it clear that funding, construction and operation of Phase 1 is its top priority. So what does that mean for Phase 2 projects, including the Merced to Sacramento and Los Angeles to San Diego sections, and the Altamont Corridor Rail Project? How will those projects be financed and constructed?

The Authority has not yet developed a financing plan for the Phase 2 high-speed train sections and the Altamont Corridor Rail Project. The Authority's new Business Plan demonstrates how the system's backbone sections can be financed. The remaining sections of the high-speed train system can be implemented incrementally. Each additional section added to the system will increase ridership and ticket sales at a marginal incremental increase in cost. Based on this approach, the link to Sacramento (via Merced), the Los Angeles to San Diego link (via the Inland Empire) and the Altamont Corridor Rail Project could be funded through additional local, state, federal or private-sector financing. This could generate further revenue surpluses by reducing the amount required from the Authority for construction.

The Authority has developed strong local and regional partnerships for the development of the Phase 2 sections and the Altamont Corridor Rail Project. Regional and local governments are devoting significant resources to support them. The San Diego Association of Governments has invested several hundred thousand dollars in studies supporting the Los Angeles to San Diego section. The Authority and the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (SJRR) have developed a funding agreement and the SJRR has committed to be a local partner in financing the planning and environmental work for the Altamont Corridor Rail Project, as well as the Merced to Sacramento section of the high-speed train system. The SJRR has already allocated \$3 million in the current fiscal year towards the environmental work for the Altamont Corridor Rail Project and the Merced to Sacramento section.

The value of support for Phase 2 sections and Altamont Corridor Rail Project should not be underestimated. Local and regional agencies can and are helping to plan for the preservation and protection of potential right-of-way as well as related local land use and transit improvements. This is essential to the future ability to construct in these sections. It is extremely important that the work on these projects continues so that right-of-way can be purchased and preserved for the future. If we are unable to protect and preserve right-of-way for the Phase 2 sections and Altamont Corridor Rail Project, it may not be feasible to implement these corridors in the future. Early investments and incremental improvements to existing rail services, like upgrading the ACE train system, can provide early community benefits. This approach could also create new travel patterns and help build up ridership to feed into Phase 1 high-speed rail sections.



## How the Altamont Corridor Rail Project fits within the High-Speed System and Plan for Phase 1 Construction

*The Altamont Corridor Rail Project is a separate passenger rail project focused on serving regional needs, which will complement the statewide high-speed train system but be designed for slower speeds. With the new Business Plan identifying construction of Phase 1 lasting until 2030 and beyond, will the Altamont Corridor need to wait until after 2030 to be improved?*

The Altamont Corridor Rail Project is currently completing an alternatives analysis process that identifies not only the ultimate high-speed compatible project configuration, but also a set of interim improvements that can be constructed to improve operations in the near future prior to 2030. Early improvements need to be built with a clear understanding of the long-term project. The current environmental process could be used to approve both short-term and long-term improvements. The interim improvements being considered include:

### Near-Term Interim Improvements

- Right-of-way acquisition and preservation
- Grade crossing improvements
- Passing tracks

### Mid-Term Interim Improvements

- Dedicated track
- Grade separations—bridges and underpasses
- Union City Intermodal Station
- Tunnels—Altamont Pass, Niles Canyon

## Regional Partners—Leading the Way

**In San Joaquin Valley—San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission** was one of the first agencies to enter into formal partnership with the California High-Speed Rail Authority. Together they created a plan to modernize the existing Altamont Commuter Express train and link it into the statewide high-speed train network as a feeder service to maximize ridership. Originally it was envisioned as a faster regional commuter train service and connector link between future Stockton, Modesto and San Jose high-speed train stations. The vision now is being expanded to provide interim regional rail service from Merced to Sacramento until Phase 2 of the high-speed train system is built—an exciting new concept!

The **San Joaquin Council of Governments** and **Stanislaus Council of Governments** also are partners and advocates of regional rail improvements and high-speed train service. The **City of Manteca** is starting a community-based design process for a new transit station. Brent Ives, Mayor of **Tracy**, has been a highly vocal supporter of creating a transit station hub to bring California High-Speed Trains and the “Super ACE” train into downtown.

**In Tri-Valley—The City of Livermore**, the **Tri-Valley Regional Rail Policy Advisory Committee**, and community activists are leading the effort to extend **BART** to Livermore. Altamont Corridor Rail Project planners have been coordinating with them to explore the possibility of connecting to BART at a future Livermore Intermodal Station. The **Metropolitan Transportation Commission** and the **Alameda County Transportation Commission** also are providing leadership on a potential intermodal transit station.

**In East Bay – Union City** is planning for a dynamic new intermodal transit station which could provide access to a variety of transit services, including BART, Caltrain Dumbarton train, ACE, and buses. New development is envisioned around the station to create a livable and affordable neighborhood that will help build high ridership for transit and offer residents a high quality of life.

**The Altamont Corridor Partnership Work Group** is a collaboration of agencies providing guidance and planning with the goals of integrating transit, maximizing efficiencies, and enhancing the regional transportation network.

