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ANDREW COHEN
COUNCIL MEMBER

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COUNCIL MEMBER

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COUNCIL MEMBER



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October 29, 2010

Dear Senator Simitian,

Enclosed is a resolution from the City of Menlo Park regarding the California High Speed Rail Project outlining our concerns with the project as currently envisioned on the San Francisco Peninsula. The resolution expresses our City Council's lack of confidence in the current High Speed Rail Authority Board.

We are asking all State legislators to take a more active role in overseeing the High Speed Rail Project, given the well-documented history of unresolved problems including unreliable ridership estimates and an inadequate business plan. Menlo Park believes leadership under the California High Speed Rail Authority Board has fallen short of what is needed for a successful completion and must be changed to ensure the project enhances Peninsula communities and maximizes the long-term potential of high speed rail.

We are deeply disappointed that measures included in the recently adopted State budget regarding legislative oversight of the project were vetoed by the Governor. Action by the legislature is needed, now more than ever, to shape a High Speed Rail Project that can succeed. Specific goals should be established such as re-examining alternatives based on sound ridership estimates, minimizing property impacts, and working cooperatively with local communities.

A fresh look at the High Speed Rail Project has the potential to reduce costs, build local support, and restore credibility to the decision making process. Please work with us to accomplish these worthy objectives.

Sincerely,

Richard Cline
Mayor

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RESOLUTION NO. 5965

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MENLO PARK URGING THE CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATURE TO EXERCISE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT CONTROL OVER THE CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY

WHEREAS, the People of the State of California have declared their intent to establish a high-speed rail system for California, and have provided that the first stage of the system is to link Los Angeles/Anaheim with the San Francisco Transbay Terminal; and

WHEREAS, the people of California have also authorized the state to borrow almost ten billion dollars to help initiate the construction of the high-speed rail system, and have placed responsibility for planning the system in the California High-Speed Rail Authority (or in a successor agency to be named by the State Legislature); and

WHEREAS, the California State Legislature (not the California High-Speed Rail Authority) is ultimately responsible for the successful completion of the high-speed rail project, which is a state project; and

WHEREAS, the State Legislature has been given legislative responsibility for fiscal oversight of the project, and state law specifically provides that the California High-Speed Rail Authority is not able to spend money, or otherwise to carry out planning and implementation work, unless the State Legislature has first approved the appropriation of the money necessary to accomplish that work, as the State Legislature determines in each year's state budget; and

WHEREAS, reports from the State Auditor and the Legislative Analyst's Office have made it clear that the California High-Speed Rail Authority is failing to successfully accomplish the project as specified in Proposition 1A, and that the Authority has mismanaged and is continuing to mismanage the proposed high-speed rail project; and

WHEREAS, the Authority has:

- (a) Not based its planning on adequate ridership studies which is critical to proper system design; and
- (b) Failed to adequately address flaws of its ridership model identified by the University of California at Berkeley Institute of Transportation Studies; and
- (c) Failed to prepare an adequate business plan which identifies the risk of State subsidies for system operations; and
- (d) Has spent money for "project level" design work, costing millions of dollars, before the Authority completed the "program level" route selection process for the route to connect the Central Valley to the San Francisco Peninsula; and
- (e) Has failed to respond to the legitimate concerns of Peninsula communities, including the City of Menlo Park, about the extremely adverse impacts that the project proposed by the High-Speed Rail Authority would have on the local communities located along the Caltrain right of way; and

- (f) Committed to work with cities along the Caltrain corridor to explore a full range of alternatives but recently published a supplemental alternatives analysis report that eliminated consideration of tunneling options, contrary to the wishes of many Peninsula cities; and
- (g) Fails to accomplish the high-speed rail project endorsed by the voters in a way that protects local communities of the Peninsula from devastating economic and environmental impacts; and

WHEREAS, the Authority's failures are directly traceable, among other things, to the fact that the members of the California High-Speed Rail Authority Board of Directors do not have experience or expertise in actually designing, building, and operating a high-speed rail project, and

WHEREAS, the Authority's current plans for routing on the San Francisco Peninsula could have devastating impacts on local communities along the Caltrain corridor; and

WHEREAS, it appears that there are feasible alternatives to the Authority's current plan, but the Authority has failed and refused to do a detailed analysis of possible alternatives; and

WHEREAS, the California High-Speed Rail Authority has not completed the investment grade ridership study and financial analysis that will lead to a successful high-speed rail project for California, as mandated by the voters; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Menlo Park believes that it is imperative that the California State Legislature exercise greater leadership and increasing budgetary control over the California High-Speed Rail Authority, in connection with the management and implementation of the proposed high-speed rail project, and that the State Legislature address all of the concerns outlined in this resolution.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the City of Menlo Park hereby declares that it has "no confidence" in the ability of the California High-Speed Rail Authority to carry out a successful high-speed rail project for the State of California, as approved by the voters in Proposition 1A, or to respond to the legitimate needs and concerns of the City of Menlo Park and other local communities along the Caltrain alignment on the San Francisco Peninsula; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Menlo Park hereby urges the California State Legislature to exercise fiscal and management controls over the expenditures and activities of the California High-Speed Rail Authority, and to maintain continuing and detailed legislative oversight, and to insure:

1. That any high-speed rail project constructed on the San Francisco Peninsula will respond to the legitimate concerns of communities on the Peninsula, including the City of Menlo Park, as expressed to the High-Speed Rail Authority and the Legislature, and that any such project demonstrably avoid the catastrophic economic and environmental impacts that would be caused by the operation of high-speed trains on an elevated structure constructed

through the middle of these vital and thriving communities, with all the attendant noise, vibration, and blight that such a project would cause; and

2. That the California High-Speed Rail Authority fully comply with the financial and management oversight requirements of Proposition 1A, and that decisions about the proposed high-speed rail project not occur unless supported by reliable and accurate ridership and financial analyses demonstrating the actual operational and financial adequacy of the system; and
3. That further expenditures on "project level" planning work on the San Francisco Peninsula be deferred until the ridership projections have been corrected and peer reviewed. Ridership assumptions drive key decisions such as the number of tracks needed on the Peninsula.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Menlo Park hereby urges the California State Legislature seriously consider appointing a successor agency or to replace the current Board membership to p manage the proposed high-speed rail project, as specifically permitted by Proposition 1A, because of the demonstrable failure of the California High Speed Rail Authority properly and successfully to manage and complete the proposed project in conformance with the requirements of Proposition 1A, as adopted by the voters.

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 by said Council on the fifth day of October, 2010, by the following votes:

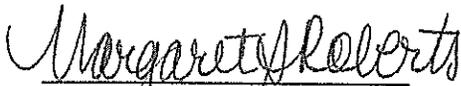
AYES: Cline, Fergusson, Robinson

NOES: Boyle

ABSENT: Cohen

ABSTAIN: None

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Official Seal of said City on this fifth day of October, 2010.


Margaret S. Roberts, MMC
City Clerk