



DATE: January 28, 2025

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Director of Public Works

SUBJECT: South Bay Connect: Discuss and Provide Feedback to Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority Staff

RECOMMENDATION

That City Council provide feedback to Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority Staff on the South Bay Connect project.

SUMMARY

The South Bay Connect Project proposes to relocate the Capitol Corridor intercity passenger rail service between Oakland and Newark from the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Niles Subdivision to the existing UPRR Coast Subdivision. While the project has potential regional benefits by creating a faster and more reliable passenger rail route between Oakland and San Jose, it comes at a local cost to Hayward. As a result of this project, the Capitol Corridor will no longer serve the Hayward station at 22555 Meekland Avenue.

The City elected officials, staff, and many residents have expressed strong concerns to Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) staff during the planning and environmental phases of the project related to the closure of the station and the impact it would have on the City.

The proposed Project also includes constructing a new passenger rail station at the existing Ardenwood Park-and-Ride in Fremont on the Coast Subdivision to serve southern Alameda County passengers and create new transbay transit connections to the San Francisco Peninsula.

BACKGROUND

Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) is the managing agency of the State-supported Capitol Corridor intercity passenger rail service that connects the greater Sacramento region and the San Francisco Bay Area. The Capitol Corridor serves 18 stations in eight (8) Northern California counties, and one of the stations in Alameda County is

located in Hayward at 22555 Meekland Avenue. The service is operated by Amtrak on Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) and Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (operator of the Caltrain service) rights-of-way. Currently, the Capitol Corridor operates twelve (12) roundtrips on weekdays between Sacramento and Oakland, with six (6) of those roundtrips extending between Oakland and San Jose, and eleven (11) roundtrips on weekends between Sacramento and Oakland, with seven (7) of those extending between Oakland and San Jose. Service frequency and schedule is closely coordinated with Amtrak and UPRR and is constrained by State-owned rail equipment availability and shared rail corridor with freight.

One of the responsibilities of the CCJPA as managing agency is to plan the future of the Capitol Corridor service. From 2014 to 2016, CCJPA conducted a Vision Plan that lays out long-term visions for future Capitol Corridor service and high-level strategies to achieve those visions. One of the strategies to improve service between Oakland and San Jose identified in the 2014-2016 Capitol Corridor Vision Plan is to relocate the service between Oakland and Newark from the current UPRR Niles Subdivision to the shorter, more direct UPRR Coast Subdivision.¹ This service shift, along with associated rail infrastructure improvements, is included in the project named South Bay Connect (Project). A map of the Project is included as Attachment II. The Project is also included in multiple iterations of the California State Rail Plan as part of the statewide vision to improve rail service (passenger and freight).²

According to CCJPA, South Bay Connect is expected to improve the service efficiency and reliability of the Capitol Corridor service overall by relocating service to a shorter and less congested rail corridor through Alameda County. The service relocation will discontinue Capitol Corridor service at the Hayward and Fremont-Centerville stations. The Project includes constructing a new station at the Ardenwood Park-and-Ride in Fremont to facilitate intermodal transfers between rail and transbay buses and shuttles serving communities on the Peninsula. Modeling indicates a net increase in ridership from the improved service and new station at Ardenwood. Ardenwood was identified as the preferred new station location based on quantitative and qualitative analysis comparing different potential station locations along the Coast Subdivision that allowed for convenient transbay access, however, the Project does not preclude additional stations from being developed along the Coast Subdivision in the future, as supported by local municipalities.

In addition to the proposed new station, rail infrastructure improvements are proposed on the Coast Subdivision between Oakland and Newark to ensure adequate capacity for existing freight rail service and proposed new passenger rail service, including installation of an additional track, replacement of existing rail and ties, and upgrade and slight shifts of existing tracks to allow higher train speeds, among others. The Project also proposes improvements at 25 existing at-grade crossings and at seven (7) grade-separated crossings. Existing railroad bridges would be replaced or modified to accommodate the addition of a track between Oakland and Newark. Retaining walls would be required at specific locations

¹ [Capitol Corridor Vision Plan](#)

² [California State Rail Plan](#)

to accommodate railroad improvements on the Coast Subdivision. Actual rail infrastructure improvements may be less in scope, as details are determined through continuing discussions with UPRR.

Capitol Corridor operations on the Coast Subdivision would not affect the frequency of existing passenger or freight rail services along the rail line. The project does not include any changes to freight rail service operations on the Niles and Oakland subdivisions. Capitol Corridor service to the existing Hayward and Fremont-Centerville stations on the Niles Subdivision would be discontinued, but Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) would continue to stop at the Fremont-Centerville station. The Project does not propose the demolition of the Hayward station; it would remain as is. The City owns the parking lot serving this station and would separately determine future use of this parcel.

On May 29, 2024, CCJPA released the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) of the Project for public review and comment for a period of 45 days, in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). When the public comment period closed on July 15, 2024, a total of 310 commenters submitted comments on the Draft EIR, including the City and several residents and organizations in Hayward. CCJPA prepared formal responses to all comments, which are included as part of the Final EIR. A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program and a summary of clarifications and revisions to the Draft EIR as a result of public comments received are also included in the Final EIR. The Final EIR and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program were presented before the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Board on November 20, 2024, and the CCJPA Board certified the Final EIR and approved the Project to continue to the next phase.

DISCUSSION

CCJPA staff have heard and acknowledge concerns from the Hayward community about the proposed discontinuation of Capitol Corridor service at the Hayward Station. While nearby BART service provides connections to the Capitol Corridor at Oakland Coliseum and Richmond Stations, the Coliseum connection point has room for improvement and the Richmond connection is a long distance from Hayward, making it impractical for most riders. During the CCJPA Board meeting certifying the Final EIR, CCJPA Board members suggested that CCJPA staff look into enhancing the connection to BART at the Coliseum station to help facilitate connectivity to the regional rail network for residents of Hayward.

This work session was set up at the request of CCJPA staff to present the regional case for the South Bay Connect project directly to Council and to respond to Council member and public requests received during the environmental phase of the project to conduct outreach about the Project in Hayward. CCJPA staff are seeking public and elected officials comments and questions from the Council about the South Bay Connect Project and Capitol Corridor services in general and welcome continued engagement with the Hayward community as the Project proceeds.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

This is a work session to discuss a proposed project led by the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority. There is no economic impact as a result of this item. However, as mentioned before, the project will result in the loss of the station in Downtown Hayward, which could have a yet unknown economic impact on the City.

FISCAL IMPACT

This is a routine item and has no fiscal impact. The project, as envisioned, is expected to cost \$700 to \$900 million. The planning and environmental phases of this work were funded by the State through the State Rail Assistance (SRA) program and the competitive Transit and Intercity Rail Cooperative Program (TIRCP). Design is fully funded through TIRCP.

The Project would need to seek Federal, State, and regional funding for the right-of-way and construction phases. The voter approved Measure BB expenditure plan includes \$40 million for Capitol Corridor Service Expansion, which could be used for this or other projects along the Capitol Corridor in Alameda County. The Project will likely require significant Federal funding, with the future of Federal funding for railroad projects uncertain in the short term.

STRATEGIC ROADMAP

This project is not a City of Hayward project and is not directly related to the City's Strategic Roadmap.

SUSTAINABILITY FEATURES

There are no sustainability features associated with this action. Loss of the Capitol Corridor station in Hayward would reduce residents access to regional transit, which could increase use of automobile modes.

PUBLIC CONTACT

CCJPA has conducted public engagement and outreach as part of the South Bay Connect project since the project officially kicked off in 2019 and continuing throughout the CEQA EIR process.

In 2019, the project team worked with various City staff to determine potential station locations in Hayward along the Coast Subdivision for consideration to be included in the project. CCJPA initiated the project's public environmental scoping process on June 29, 2020 with the distribution of a Notice of Preparation (NOP). Public notices about the project and the scoping comment period were posted on the Capitol Corridor website as well as on a dedicated project website, supplemented by posts on CCJPA's social media channels. Public notices were published in various newspapers in English, Spanish, and

Mandarin and a postcard mailer was mailed out to 15,095 homeowners within 1,000 feet of the project corridor and regional stakeholders. A virtual/online public scoping meeting was available during the 45-day public comment period at www.SouthBayConnect.com to allow for participation in a safe environment while social distancing. Two telephone town halls were hosted during the scoping period where members from the public could hear about the project, speak with project team members, ask questions and submit formal comments. Both telephone town halls were held in English, Spanish, and Mandarin.

To continue public engagement after the public scoping period, the project team convened a Corridor Working Group in 2021 consisting of representatives from various community organizations and associations from cities along the project corridor (Oakland, San Leandro, Hayward, Union City, and Fremont) to share and distribute project information. Organizations and associations from Hayward included the Eden Shores Community, Cherryland Neighborhood Association, Community Resources for Independent Living (CRIL). Three (3) online Community Work Group meetings were held throughout 2021.

Following a period of project development from 2021 to 2024 during which preliminary engineering design and environmental impact analyses were conducted, a Notice of Availability (NOA) of the draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was released on May 29, 2024, announcing the commencement of a 45-day public review and comment period that ended on July 15, 2024. Using the established project website and Capitol Corridor's social media following, the project team posted key information online. The team also reached out to local and regional media publications, mailed out notices to a large corridor-wide property owner/stakeholder database (over 15,900 property owners within 500 feet of the project corridor), sent multiple electronic notices, and conducted public and stakeholder meetings to share project updates and collect comments. An online, joint Community Working Group meeting was held in May 2024 before the release of the draft EIR as a courtesy to Working Group members.

CCJPA staff have notified Hayward residents who have been involved in the South Bay Connect project in the past about this work session. The City also sent notifications to residents through the City's online newsletter and social media channels. City Council also received a verbal update at the January 21, 2025 about this item and received an email with information to share with constituents.

NEXT STEPS

Capitol Corridor will review the input received from this work session.. In 2025, CCJPA plans to continue preliminary engineering design of the Project, which requires close coordination with UPRR, the owner of the railroad right-of-way, and work with the Federal Railroad Administration to include the Project as part of the Corridor Identification Program for federal funding toward NEPA analysis and preliminary design. Additional public outreach and coordination by the CCJPA for the Project is expected once NEPA analysis begins.

The following graphic presents a draft Project milestone schedule as of December 2024.³



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³ <https://southbayconnect.com/>