



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **GILROY AND MORGAN HILL OFFICIALS HOLD JOINT DISCUSSION WITH HIGH SPEED RAIL CEO ROELOF VAN ARK**

Gilroy Mayor Al Pinheiro and Gilroy Councilmember Perry Woodward along with Morgan Hill Mayor Steve Tate and Morgan Hill Councilmember Rich Constantine held a joint city discussion with the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) Chief Executive Officer Roelof van Ark regarding the California High Speed Rail Project and its impact on both communities. Also attending the meeting were Gilroy City Administrator Tom Haglund and Morgan Hill City Manager Ed Tewes. Dan Leavitt, CHSRA Deputy Executive Officer attended with Mr. van Ark.

During a productive meeting with van Ark, each city's elected officials expressed concern with the direction of project management of the high speed rail system in and through their communities. They requested Mr. van Ark's assistance in getting important project related information and community engagement underway in a coordinated and deliberate manner in order to inform the public and local leaders about the project, its design, environmental review and schedule. The CHSRA provided assurances that the additional alternative of an at-grade solution would be evaluated in the environmental impact report (EIR), and that the Draft EIR is currently anticipated to be made available for public review in the fall of 2011.

Mr. van Ark and the city representatives engaged in a frank discussion of the project including the need for funding so that appropriate review of technical studies, station and parking development, and transit oriented development plans could be undertaken to fully assess the impacts and coordinate mitigations with CHSRA. Mr. van Ark highlighted several funding mechanisms that are being developed and for which local communities will be able to apply for project related monies. Importantly, the CHSRA clarified its position on local responsibility for station and parking facilities distinguishing between functional facilities the Authority will construct and iconic structures that cities/counties may participate in as well.

Mr. van Ark expressed interest in the issues facing each city and underscored his expectations that CHSRA is seeking a cooperative partnership with each community to pursue the development of the high speed rail project. Mr. van Ark indicated that the cities could expect improved communication with the CHSRA through enhanced outreach and details regarding the project's technical information and design. The group received assurances that CHSRA would work more closely with local elected officials to provide the best information available. This is especially important because the Merced to San Jose

section will be of great focus and be a high priority in the light of the CHSRA's decision to begin construction in the Central Valley, in order to connect the populations of the Valley to the Bay Area.

van Ark suggested and the group agreed to hold additional meetings to ensure project expectations and communication remains focused, efficient and helpful.

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