

45 Mt. Vernon Lane  
Atherton, Ca. 94027  
Feb. 5, 2009

California High-Speed Rail Authority  
925 L Street, Suite 1425  
Sacramento, Ca. 94814

Dear HSR Planner,

As a resident of Atherton whose property might be taken in the process of implementing the HSR, I want to register several concerns.

1. I have at least eight trees, depending on how much land you might grab that act as a buffer between me and the railroad that would disappear, almost 25 if you took more than 35 feet. These trees not only buffer the sound of the 96 trains that currently come thru, they provide better air, a more appealing view, a habitat for birds and other animals, and a sense of safety.

2. I have a 300 year old Oak that is within 90 feet of the current trains that would be severely affected by additional trains coming through.

3, I have 36 solar panels that face south/southwest that depend on the sun to provide as much energy for my house and the rest of the valley. Any kind of wall 15 feet or more could/would affect there production. For that I would expect to be highly compensated.

4. Any wall you construct would greatly alter the microclimate of my property, killing off many of the valuable flora that has been painstakingly planted.

5. The atmosphere around the trains would be far more polluted with 172 trains creating dust and that in turn would create more allergies.

6. I cannot even imagine the amount of increased noise that I would have to deal with. I've managed to create Nature's sound wall, but if you elevate the trains, that will not be possible and the artificial wall will only end up bouncing the sound directly into my house. I know this as I've investigated putting in a sound wall and my house is in the "bounce zone" as it is farther away from the trains than other houses around me.

7. You might as well start calling my area "East Atherton" as any sound wall will create that very effect, bringing down property values on this side of the tracks dramatically. There will be a barrier between us and the rest of the town that will not be possible to remove.

8. The wall will be absolutely considered an eyesore since this community has put tremendous effort into flora and natural materials in their landscaping. No 15 or higher wall could ever be considered aesthetically pleasing.
9. The unsightly electrical wires will also materially hurt the value of those properties surrounding the trains.
10. With four to six tracks, what safety measures are you taking? That is a huge amount of space for children and others to wander.
11. If you take 35 or more from the other side, some of those houses will be extremely close to the wall. (As would the icon, Willie Mays' house, if you did it on this side.) Also, the access roads would be affected—so you might as well buy their homes.
12. We have a public park on the same side of the tracks as my house which is supposed to be protected from land grabbing, eminent domain. This park is a well use, highly loved park. Any land taken from it would affect the tennis courts which are becoming popular again, this time by young families with children, the Little League field and the soccer fields would be affected. These are very important features of our park that CANNOT be destroyed by HSR.
13. I would get no direct benefit from the train even though I use the Cal Train frequently to go to San Francisco. I enjoy the 55 minute trek, giving me time to relax and enjoy the view. I would not travel to Palo Alto to take advantage of HSR as I enjoy being able to walk to and from the station. How dangerous will it now be for me to walk to the station?

Obviously, I would most definitely ask that you dig a big ditch, similar to what happened in Boston and Reno. Many of the unsightly and sound concerns would be diminished. Obviously safety concerns might not be reduced and the loss of my trees as well as thousands of others would still be affected and that is a crime in my mind. Not having a division wall is the only consequence that will not have a major financial impact on my property and on the properties around me.

Please, please seriously consider ditching between Menlo Park and Atherton, if not between Palo Alto (or Mountain View) and Redwood City. The economics of these cities will be horribly altered otherwise.

Respectfully,

Marylue Timpson