

Palo Alto council declares no confidence in high-speed rail project

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Palo Alto council members declared no confidence in the state's high-speed rail project in a resolution passed unanimously Monday night. The council also called upon state and federal officials to pull funding for the \$43 billion San Francisco-to-Los Angeles bullet train.

The "no confidence" resolution passed at the meeting is similar to one approved by the council's high-speed rail committee last week, which called on the governor and state Legislature to stop funding the project unless the rail authority's governing body is removed.

In a 5-4 vote, the council also amended the resolution to ask the Federal Railroad Administration to pull funding.

Council Member Larry Klein said he thought Palo Alto should be "intellectually consistent" by also opposing federal funding and not just state funding.

"If we want the state to stop funding than I think we have to say the same things to the feds," Klein said.

Mayor Pat Burt and Council Members Greg Scharff, Nancy Shepherd and Sid Espinosa voted against the resolution.

"I don't see the point at this point in time in taking the position of opposing the federal funds from potentially being able to come to this segment," Burt said, acknowledging Caltrain's interest in receiving funding from the project.

Council members also voted Monday night to urge the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board, which operates Caltrain, to aggressively and publicly protect the interests of communities along its corridor and not accept an aerial structure in cities that oppose it.

The resolution acknowledges the council supported a 2008 bond measure to partially fund the project. "But since 2008 an overwhelming number of facts have been discovered or developed and events have occurred that lead us to believe that the only reasonable alternative is to stop the (California High-Speed Rail Project) now," the resolution says.

The council later headed into a closed-session meeting to consider suing the California High-Speed Rail Authority over an environmental report council members say is inadequate.

Any potential decision was not reached as of press time.

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