



**Date:** October 8, 2009

**To:** Residents of the State of California

**Subject:** California's High-Speed Rail - *International Design Competition Proposal*

Dear Residents of the State of California,

America's first High-Speed Rail will be an enormous undertaking for the State of California with the potential for unparalleled accomplishments for both the state and our nation as a whole. *We need to do it right for everyone.*

For the past twenty years, our firm, Joseph Bellomo Architects, Inc. has been involved in the design, construction, and implementation of significant urban development in downtown Palo Alto, California. Our passion for alternative transportation and environmentally responsive designs coupled with our interest in the local environment has motivated our involvement with the High-Speed Rail.

After attending the local meetings regarding the new High Speed Rail, we are extremely concerned that the implementation of the system will be fragmented. The focus at meetings thus far has been on individual segments of the line instead of a unified, comprehensive statewide system. Though we understand that the aim is to obtain context sensitivity for each community, there has been little consideration of sustainable construction, cost, or the passenger experience. Existing high-speed rail systems such as in Japan, Germany, France, and Spain were not separately designed on a community-by-community basis. The cohesiveness of such a large-scale system is paramount in order to maintain safety, reliability, and ease of maintenance.

In order to implement a successful system throughout California, it is our opinion that the solutions must consider specific statewide goals with a holistic contextual approach. We propose a method that will generate ideas in a creative, cost effective, provocative, and constructive manner: an **International Design Competition**.

By involving the best and most creative designers in the world with experience in high-speed rail systems, California will get the most innovative and inventive ideas from expert professionals ensuring realistic and attainable solutions.

Precedents have shown that holding an international design competition produces not only exceptional ideas from world-renown architects and engineers, but also generates press and enthusiasm from both the design field and the general public. The State of California can offer a **world-class solution** that sets a standard for sustainable, affordable, and notable designs. We feel a competition will also provide statewide acceptance of the proposal.

Our goal, like yours, is to support California's High-Speed Rail and find the optimal solution. We believe holding an international design competition is the most effective way to achieve this.

Please review the enclosed California High Speed Rail International Design Competition proposal for the future success of America's first High-Speed Rail. We sincerely hope that the California High Speed Rail Authority will consider this proposal to create a world-class transit system.

Sincerely,

Joseph Bellomo, Architect, AIA



## California HSR International Design Competition Proposal

- **Mission:** To bring creative architecture/engineering to California's High-Speed Rail that promotes sustainable, cohesive, and affordable design that elegantly connects the major hubs of California. Even the most ordinary sections of the system will be part of the unified design vision.
- **Competition Schedule:** A two-tiered competition first generating an abundance of ideas and then narrowing the pool to three final concepts for further development.
- **Construction Costs:** To ensure reasonable and attainable designs, the program brief must specify a *realistic* construction budget for the designers. Designs should propose novel and sustainable methodologies that reduce construction costs.
- **Competition Funding:** Major California companies who are invested in the future of the high-speed rail can assist with funding the competition. The cost will be minimal in comparison to the return of forward-thinking, inventive ideas.
- **Goals:** Including, but not limited to the following;
  - **Scope** - Include the entire length of the High Speed Rail, ensuring a holistic, cohesive design while also identifying specific site constraints within each of the following areas;
    - Urban: San Francisco, San Jose, Sacramento, Los Angeles, San Diego, etc.
    - Suburban- Peninsula: Redwood City, Palo Alto, etc.
    - Rural- Central California: Stockton, Fresno, Bakersfield, etc.

Outreach – Incorporate community desires and continue public involvement.

Uniformity - Account for both the micro and macro contextual scales in generating a consistent construction methodology that can be executed throughout the State of California.

Sustainability and Efficiency – Involve leaders in green building and employ methods of minimal environmental impact by focusing on LEED principles.

Innovation – Provide designs that integrate with the distinctive landscapes and become synonymous with other California points of interests. Create a complete architectural engineering solution that creates a “ribbon of technology” connecting the state.