

**INNOVATIVE FOUNDATION ALTERNATIVE
FOR HIGH SPEED RAIL APPLICATION**

**Quarterly Progress Report
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**ACCELERATED BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION
UNIVERSITY TRANSPORTATION CENTER**

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1 Background and Introduction

Bridges are key components of the high speed rail (HSR) infrastructure, while whole new construction of HSR bridges along a HSR line will take some tremendous cost and time. Utilizing the existing structure and foundation for HSR applications provides a good alternative to the challenge, but the methods for upgrading the existing substandard bridges to meet the HSR standards remain largely undeveloped in the engineering community. Focus also needs to be given to the seismic retrofit, considering California started the first HSR line construction to connect the bay area and southern California.

This project proposes an innovative micropile-based foundation system as ABC solution to tackle the challenges. The concept was inspired by the micropile foundations for transmission towers using prefabricated caps, which are similarly leveraged to ‘rapidly’ construct micropile foundation islands. These islands are then connected to the existing foundation using dampers to control the unwanted motions. The developed foundation system may also provide a potential solution to new construction of HSR bridges, where traditional deep foundations may not work.

The team will validate the design concept through detailed finite element soil-foundation-structure interaction analysis by modeling the full bridge systems that incorporate the foundation systems. Extensive nonlinear time history analysis will be conducted to study the seismic response of HSR bridges with the innovative foundations. Upon successful completion of tasks, the feasibility of the proposed approach will be demonstrated with the optimal design sought between the overall performance of the new foundation system and construction cost. This project will deliver the ABC guideline to apply the innovative foundation systems for HSR.

2 Problem Statement

One of the transportation solutions that have been always considered in the past few decades is the high speed rail (HSR) where plans for the HSR date back to the High Speed Ground Transportation Act of 1965 (Public Law 89-220, 79 Stat. 893). However, full implementation of an inter-state HSR has never been accomplished. Only recently and after several delays, California is on track for a HSR line that connects the bay area to southern California and construction for the HSR infrastructure started as of 2017. Bridges are key components of the HSR infrastructure and the state plan is to consider new construction as well as utilizing existing structure and foundation if appropriate. The inherent characteristics of HSR raise new problems beyond those found in typical highway construction, so comprehensive approach on the bridge structure and foundation system needs to be made to systematically tackle the challenges. Upgrading of existing bridges is of particular concern, e.g., (a) HSR bridge superstructures require high stiffness and are likely to be heavy, so upgrading of the existing structure for HSR will apply significant surcharge on the bridge foundation, for which a retrofit solution also needs to be developed; (b) The stiff, heavy components will induce seismic forces that are much higher than in highway bridges, so the ABC solutions developed for highway bridges will have to be reworked to satisfy the more stringent requirements in seismic areas; (c) Construction issues also have to be optimized regarding how

this upgrade can be best accommodated in a short period time without causing high costs and traffic disruptions.

The overall goal of this project is to develop an innovative foundation system that can be ‘rapidly’ installed for HSR bridges and perform feasibility study. To this end, micropiles are leveraged as the ABC solution to retrofit the existing conventional bridge foundation systems or a potential solution to new construction, where traditional deep foundations may not work. Micropiles have been broadly adopted as foundation supporting elements to existing structures in the geotechnical engineering practice [1], and there are many good reasons to employ the micropiles for this project to develop innovative foundation alternative for high speed rail application: (a) Axial and lateral resistance of the foundation can be effectively increased to resist the HSR load. Network of micropiles can be also leveraged to reinforce the soil mass [2]; (b) Battered (inclined) micropiles presents high seismic resistance, which is suitable for seismic retrofitting in California; (c) Installation of micropiles is inherently an ABC solution, as it can be rapidly completed in a short time window with minimal interference to traffic. Construction noise and vibration level is low compared to other types of foundation; (d) Micropiles can be installed for virtually any soil and even for some difficult geologic profiles, so the technique can be universally applied to a wide range of subsurface conditions; (e) The equipment used for installing micropiles is relatively small, thus useful for retrofitting or construction in locations hard to access.

The research will focus on both component and full bridge systems modeling and detailed seismic analysis will be conducted to investigate the seismic performance of the full bridge with the innovative foundation system.

3 Research Approach and Methods

Our approach for this proposed study is an analytical and computational approach where detailed finite element modeling and analyses will be considered. OpenSees, an opens source framework developed by the Pacific Earthquake Engineering Center, will be adopted for the finite element computation [3]. Component and system modeling and analysis will be conducted in a collaborative effort between FIU and UNR. The two teams will work together closely throughout the project. However, the PI from FIU will be mostly in charge of the component modeling which involves design of the innovative foundation system and the soil-foundation interaction. On the other hand, the PI from UNR will be mostly in charge of incorporating foundation and soil models into a full bridge system to conduct seismic analysis for different bridge systems with both conventional and the innovative foundation system. The specific research objectives include: (1) synergizing available national and international data on HSR bridge configurations and foundation systems; (2) develop innovative foundation systems and validate the design concept through soil-foundation interaction analysis; (3) develop detailed finite element models for full bridge systems that incorporate the foundation systems and integrate soil-foundation-structure interaction; (4) conduct extensive nonlinear time history analysis to investigate the seismic response of HSR bridges with innovative foundations.

4 Description of Research Project Tasks

A comprehensive analytical and computational approach will be used and several research activities will be executed to accomplish the objectives of this study. A summary of the proposed research tasks is as follows:

- Task 1 – Literature search on HSR bridges and components
- Task 2 – Conceptual development of Innovative foundation system
- Task 3 – Component modeling of foundation system and soil-foundation interaction
- Task 4 – Develop HSR computational models for different configurations
- Task 5 – Conduct analytical studies of the bridge model
- Task 6 – Summarize the results in a final report

Task 1 – Update literature search on HSR bridge configurations and different components types and modeling

This task will perform extensive literature review to collect data on the different components and configurations of HSR using national and international studies and available design guidelines. Another major focus of this literature review is to compile the case histories of micropile projects that offered cost-effective and efficient means for underpinning the existing foundation and seismic retrofitting. The literature review efforts will particularly focus on finding information related to the micropile foundation design against dynamic loads to better proceed with the conceptual development of innovative foundation system for HSR application in California. The literature review is currently in progress at two fronts. The retrofit and micropiles design and applications is one. The other front focuses on collecting information on HSR infrastructure around the world especially HSR bridge archetypes. Table 1 summarizes the HSR in operation and under construction along with other statistics from around the world. At least 19 countries around the world are building or planning new high-speed rail lines. Few examples include:

- China invested in building the world’s most extensive HSR system.
- Saudi Arabia began construction on 276-mile HSR line connecting holy cities of Medina and Mecca via Jeddah.
- Within the European Union, Spain is constructing about 1,500 miles of HSR lines.
- France is planning more than 2,500 miles of new HSR lines.
- England proposed second phase of its national high-speed rail network.

Table 1 - HSR in Operation and Under Construction Worldwide

Country	In Operation				Under Construction			Total		
	First year of operation	Miles	Percent of Total	Top Speed (mph)	Miles	Percent of Total	Top Speed (mph)	Miles	Percent of Total	Annual Ridership
China	2003	3,914	37.2	220	2,696	55.9	220	6,610	43.1	290,540,000
Japan	1964	1,655	15.7	190	235	4.9	230	1,890	12.3	288,836,000
Spain	1992	1,278	12.2	190	1,098	22.7	190	2,376	15.5	28,751,000
France	1981	1,178	11.2	200	130	2.7	200	1,309	8.5	114,395,000
Germany	1991	798	7.6	190	235	4.9	190	1,033	6.7	73,709,000
Italy	1981	574	5.5	190	—	—	—	574	3.7	33,377,000
South Korea	2004	256	2.4	190	116	2.4	190	372	2.4	37,477,000
USA	2000	362	2.1	150	—	—	—	362	1.5	3,200,000
Taiwan	2007	214	2.0	190	—	—	—	214	1.4	32,349,000
Turkey	2009	146	1.4	160	317	6.6	160	463	3.0	942,000
Belgium	1997	130	1.2	190	—	—	—	130	0.8	9,561,000
The Netherlands	2009	75	0.7	190	—	—	—	75	0.5	6,005,000
United Kingdom	2003	70	0.7	190	—	—	—	70	0.5	9,220,000
World Total	—	10,513	100.0	—	4,827	100.0	—	15,340	100.0	928,362,000

Notes: Data is sorted by miles in operation. China's annual ridership is an estimate based on various news reports. USA's annual ridership reflects FY 2010 ridership on Amtrak's Acela Express service on the Northeast Corridor.

Source: UIC (2011; 2009).

Task 2 – Conceptual development of innovative foundation system

There are two different design mechanisms contributed by micropiles when used as foundation supporting elements, which are (a) Direct structural support (Case 1 micropiles) and (b) Soil reinforcement (Case 2 micropiles). Case 1 micropiles are commonly referred to the case where vertically installed micropiles are directly supporting the foundation load. On the other hand, Case 2 micropiles are typically a network of reticulated elements working as a composite pile-soil foundation by encompassing and reinforcing the internal soil [5]. This project is particularly interested in developing (c) a third type of mechanism (hereafter, referred as Case 3) to ‘significantly’ enhance overall seismic performance of bridge in high seismic areas: The mechanism is realized by utilizing the dampers installed between the existing foundation and neighboring ‘micropile islands’. This design was inspired by the micropile foundations with prefabricated caps used for transmission towers against high winds [4]. As the prefabricated cap is used along with the rapid micropile installation, the construction is fast. Furthermore, the seismic retrofit can be easier for the bridge foundations in locations with limited access. Case 3 mechanism may be combined with the other types of design mechanism (i.e., Case 1 or 2) to increase the resistance against the increased load due to HSR. No further development has been done on this task to date.

Task 3 - Component modeling of Innovative foundation system and soil-foundation interaction

There are some number of design factors to consider in designing the micropile-based foundation system. Given the target design mechanism, i.e., combination of Case 3 with Case 1 or 2, these factors can be considered at three different levels: (1) Individual micropile island: the factors do not only require to determine the geometry and material properties of individual micropiles, e.g., angle of batter, size of casing and embedment length, but also configuration of the micropiles in the island such as the number of micropiles and spacing. The group effect caused by the configuration of micropiles will be carefully examined, which may negatively impact the total capacity of the group if micropiles are too closely spaced, because the overlapped influence zones of the closely spaced individual micropiles will reduce the nominal capacity. On the other hand, if the spacing of micropiles is large, the cost to prefabricate the micropile cap will increase; (2) Layout of micropile islands: the influence of the overall layout of islands will be examined, including the number of islands and spatial arrangement of them. For example, if the islands are too close to the existing foundation, the soil between the island and the existing foundation may be more susceptible to their relative motions. On the other hand, if the islands are placed too far, the construction cost will increase; (3) Connection between the micropile islands and the existing foundation: viscoelastic dampers will be considered as the energy dissipating system to suppress the motion of existing foundation. The parametric studies on these factors will be systematically performed through finite element soil-foundation interaction analysis. The feasibility of the proposed approach will be demonstrated and the optimal design will be also sought between the overall performance of the new foundation system and construction cost. OpenSees will be adopted for this task. 2D foundation system will be considered first for proof concept, and then the concept will be expanded to 3D. To expedite the parametric studies, the structure above the foundation will be modeled as a single degree of freedom. Dynamic amplification, resultant forces and bending moments at various locations of the micropiles and the existing structure will be analyzed. The viscoelastic dampers will be modeled using the standard linear solid model. No further development has been done on this task to date.

Task 4 - Develop detailed analytical models for representative HSR bridge configurations with regular or irregular geometry

As previously mentioned, one of the objectives of Task 1 is to collect sufficient information on HSR infrastructure, with focus on bridges, from published studies, report, or design codes and guidelines. The objective of Task 4, which will be executed at UNR in parallel with Task 2 at FIU, is to develop representative bridge models for HSR. The California high speed train project technical memorandum for design [6] will be considered to identify the main components of bridge configurations under consideration by the CA HSR Authority and the associated design loads. Moreover, the research team will work with the CA HSR Authority, if represented on the project advisory panel, to identifying existing bridges or infrastructure that could be potentially used for future HSR with further retrofitting using the innovative foundations proposed in this study. Another option to consider for developing bridge configurations is considering design examples

from other countries that have excelled in HSR infrastructure engineering. Several bridge configurations with regular and irregular geometries could be considered (e.g. curved bridges or bridges with unequal pier heights). All bridge models will be developed in OpenSees and will consider the different components for soil, foundation, and structure for full interaction. As part of this task, ground motions that represent the seismic hazard in CA and at specific sites where the HSR is expected to be extended will be selected. Suites of ground motions will be assembled to represent different scenarios, e.g. near fault rupture, and to be used in the analysis in Task 5. No further development has been done on this task to date.

Task 5 - Conduct analytical studies of the bridge model

Using the detailed component and full system models that will be developed in Tasks 2 through 4, extensive nonlinear time history analysis will be conducted. The objective of such analysis and this task is to investigate the seismic response of potential HSR bridges retrofitted with innovative foundation systems and micropiles. To better gauge the efficiency of the retrofit or the effect of new proposed foundation systems, comparative analysis will be conducted. This is to compare the structural and seismic response of bridge models with conventional foundation systems to the new retrofitted system. The response will be determined based on damage in structural components such as columns or failure in the foundation system such as yielding in the soil. Displacement demands will be determined and compared as needed to serviceability requirements from design codes or performance-based design guidelines for HSR. One other potential way of comparing the seismic response is to develop fragility curves for the bridges with conventional and innovative foundation systems across the different damage states. The final method for presenting the analysis data can be decided through discussions and consultation with the project advisory panel. No further development has been done on this task to date.

Task 6 - Summarize the investigation results in the final report

A final report describing the details of different tasks will be prepared and submitted to the ABC-UTC steering committee for review and comments. Upon addressing the review comments, the report will be finalized and made widely available for dissemination.

5 Expected Results and Specific Deliverables

5.1 Tentative ABC-UTC Modeling Guideline

One format to disseminate the results from this project is to develop an ABC guideline to apply the innovative foundation systems for HSR. The guideline will also include preliminary design and detailing guidelines for the foundation systems.

5.2 A five-minute Video Summarizing the Project

Another format to disseminate the results from this project and contribute to workforce development and outreach is to develop a video and presentation slides to summarize the project. A webinar format can be used to publish and make available such videos or presentations.

5.3 Final Report and Publications

A comprehensive report will be developed to summarize the design and modeling approaches as well as all the analysis results. The produced analytical datasets could also be published using existing or new cyber infrastructure or data platforms if a unified research repository is employed by ABC-UTC for the research center projects. Publications in peer-reviewed journals and conference presentations will also be considered for delivering project results.

6 Schedule

Progress of tasks in this project is shown in the table below.

Task	Year 1				Year 2	
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
1. Literature search	X					
2. Innovative conceptual design		X	X			
3. Component modeling			X	X	X	
4. HSR bridge modeling		X	X			
5. Conduct component /system analysis				X	X	X
6. Final report & dissemination						X

Work performed or in progress

Work to be performed

7 References

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