



CITY COUNCIL RAIL COMMITTEE

Wednesday, June 15, 2022

Special Meeting

Community Meeting Room

1:00 PM

Agenda Order Amended

Pursuant to [AB 361](#) Palo Alto City Council and Committee meetings will be held as “hybrid” meetings with the option to attend by teleconference/video conference or in person. To maximize public safety while still maintaining transparency and public access, members of the public can choose to participate from home or attend in person. Information on how the public may observe and participate in the meeting is located at the end of the agenda.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION

[CLICK HERE TO JOIN](https://cityofpaloalto.zoom.us/j/99227307235) (<https://cityofpaloalto.zoom.us/j/99227307235>)

Meeting ID: 992 2730 7235 Phone:1(669)900-6833

The meeting will be broadcast on Cable TV Channel 26, live on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/c/cityofpaloalto>, and streamed to Midpen Media Center at <https://midpenmedia.org>.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public Comments will be accepted both in person and via Zoom meeting. All requests to speak will be taken until 5 minutes after the staff’s presentation. Written public comments can be submitted in advance to city.council@cityofpaloalto.org and will be provided to the Committee and available for inspection on the City’s website. Please clearly indicate which agenda item you are referencing in your email subject line.

Call to Order

Oral Communications

Members of the public may speak to any item NOT on the agenda.

Action Items

1. Review and Recommend Proposed Rail Committee Work Plan and Guiding Principles to the City Council for Approval

Presentation

Verbal Update on Interagency Activities

2. Updates from Caltrain, VTA, and City Staff

Next Steps and Future Agendas

Adjournment

PUBLIC COMMENT INSTRUCTIONS

Members of the Public may provide public comments to hybrid meetings via email, in person, teleconference, or by phone.

1. **Written public comments** may be submitted by email to city.council@cityofpaloalto.org.
2. **In person public comments** please complete a speaker request card located on the table at the entrance to the Council Chambers, and deliver it to the City Clerk prior to discussion of the item.
3. **Spoken public comments using a computer or smart phone** will be accepted through the teleconference meeting. To address the Council, click on the link below to access a Zoom-based meeting. Please read the following instructions carefully.
 - You may download the Zoom client or connect to the meeting in- browser. If using your browser, make sure you are using a current, up-to-date browser: Chrome 30+, Firefox 27+, Microsoft Edge 12+, Safari 7+. Certain functionality may be disabled in older browsers including Internet Explorer. Or download the Zoom application onto your phone from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store and enter the Meeting ID below
 - You may be asked to enter an email address and name. We request that you identify yourself by name as this will be visible online and will be used to notify you that it is your turn to speak.
 - When you wish to speak on an Agenda Item, click on "raise hand." The Clerk will activate and unmute speakers in turn. Speakers will be notified shortly before they are called to speak.
 - When called, please limit your remarks to the time limit allotted.
 - A timer will be shown on the computer to help keep track of your comments.
4. **Spoken public comments using a phone** use the telephone number listed below. When you wish to speak on an agenda item hit *9 on your phone so we know that you wish to speak. You will be asked to provide your first and last name before addressing the Council. You will be advised how long you have to speak. When called please limit your remarks to the agenda item and time limit allotted.

[Click to Join](#) Zoom Meeting ID: 992-2730-7235 Phone: 1(669)900-6833

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITY ACT (ADA)

Persons with disabilities who require auxiliary aids or services in using City facilities, services or programs or who would like information on the City's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, may contact (650) 329-2550 (Voice) 48 hours or more in advance.



City of Palo Alto

City Council Rail Committee Staff Report

(ID # 14462)

Meeting Date: 6/15/2022

Report Type: Action Items

Title: Review and Recommend Proposed Rail Committee Work Plan and Guiding Principles to the City Council for Approval

From: City Manager

Lead Department: Transportation Department

Recommendations

Staff recommends that the Rail Committee discuss and recommend the following items for City Council approval:

1. Rail Committee work plan (Attachment B)
2. Rail Committee Charter/guiding principles (Attachment A)

This item is agendized under the Brown Act to finalize which work items/topics are to be put into the Rail Committee's work plan. Should the Committee desire to substantively discuss specific work plan items/topics, they should be specifically agendized for a future meeting.

Discussion

On May 18th, 2022 the Rail Committee discussed and decided on several items to put in its proposed work plan. Staff drafted the attached work plan based on the Committee's discussion during the May 18th meeting. Staff seeks the Committee's final review on the draft work plan in preparing the recommendations for City Council approval. Based on the May 18th discussions, the Rail Committee would like the following items to be delegated to be included within the work plan of Rail Committee that have not already been delegated by Council:

Policy Items

- Review grade separation selection criteria for any revisions

Bicycle and Pedestrian Items

- Advance the planning and selection of new east-west bike/ped rail crossings

Funding Items

- Seek/Obtain funding for Palo Alto rail crossing projects
- Seek/Obtain funding for new east-west bike/ped rail crossings

In addition, the Committee directed staff to bring forth the guiding principles from the last iteration of the Rail Committee for review and discussion and is attached as Attachment A. Staff recommends the committee review and update the guiding principles for recommendation to the City Council.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: 04-11-2017 Adopted Rail Committee Charter
- Attachment B: Draft Rail Committee Work Plan 2022

Rail Committee Charter
[Adopted April 11, 2017]

Preamble

The City of Palo Alto supports transportation and urban design solutions for the Caltrain corridor that are compatible with community values and that complement the goals and policies of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

The Caltrain corridor has long been a physical constraint to east-west movement in Palo Alto, and the current grade crossings create traffic congestion and pose safety and noise challenges that will get worse as the frequency of train service increases. As a result, the City actively participates in planning for the rail corridor, and supports changes that improve and do not exacerbate impacts to the Palo Alto community.

Purpose of the Committee

The City Council's Rail Committee was re-established in 2015 to analyze and advance grade separated crossings for all modes of travel (bicycles, motor vehicles, transit, and pedestrians). While the Committee in the past has focused on High Speed Rail, Caltrain grade separations and electrification will be the essential focus of the Committee for 2017-2018.

Guiding Principles

1. Palo Alto seeks to improve east-west connectivity, traffic circulation, pedestrian and bicycle movements, safety, and the noise environment along the Caltrain corridor.
2. Palo Alto strongly supports Caltrain and the improved commuter rail service that will come as a result of modernization (including electrification).
3. Palo Alto will continue to work with Caltrain to ensure that all potential impacts of modernization are addressed and adopted mitigation measures are implemented.
4. Palo Alto supports Caltrain as the lead agency for all system improvements in the Caltrain corridor.
5. Palo Alto has long had concerns about the potential impacts of High Speed Rail and believes that the project should be terminated. If the project proceeds, CHSRA should provide funding for affected cities to analyze potential impacts.
6. Palo Alto believes that CAHSRA should fund grade separations and should not commence service until they are complete.

7. Palo Alto will advocate strenuously for its fair share of County Measure B funding for grade separations and actively seek additional funding from Caltrain, CAHSRA, Santa Clara County, and other external funding sources.
8. Palo Alto supports the use of the Context Sensitive Solutions process for High Speed Rail and grade separations and will structure a CSS process to engage the community in selection of a preferred grade separation alternative for the corridor.
9. Palo Alto seeks modernization of freight operations in the corridor and will seek flexibility from the UPRR to pursue desired improvements in the Caltrain corridor.
10. Palo Alto will work cooperatively with neighboring communities with respect to HSR and Caltrain issues of mutual concern, including grade separations.

Attachment B

DRAFT RAIL COMMITTEE 2022-23 WORKPLAN

Focus Issue	Planned Rail Committee Activities	Anticipated Timeframe
A. Advance the planning and design of preferred rail crossing alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review grade separation selection criteria for any revisions Receive progress reports and review consultant engineering studies as work proceeds Monitor and engage with Caltrain on San Francisquito Bridge rehabilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional studies will take up to a year, dependent on start date and other criteria (such as any holds for 4 tracks info etc.)
B. Seek/Obtain funding for Palo Alto rail crossing projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for new funding opportunities and grants Monitor and engage with Caltrain, VTA, MTC, CAHSR, and other State/Federal funding/legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City has advocated for funding opportunities and applied for grants This is an ongoing task
C. Seek changes to rail design criteria that add costs and uncertainty to Palo Alto crossing projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate Caltrain review and revision of design criteria through LPMG Monitor and engage on HSR final EIR/EIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters to Caltrain sent regarding 4-tracks and key design standards LPMG receiving regular updates on Caltrain grade separation study
D. Advance the planning and selection of new east-west bike/ped rail crossings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive updates and provide feedback on new crossings as Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan (BPTP) Update proceeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BPTP project is scheduled with procurement for Request for Proposals in Summer, project to continue into 2023
E. Seek/Obtain funding for new east-west bike/ped rail crossings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage VTA for use and prioritization of Measure B Grade Separation funds for bike/ped crossings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter sent to VTA requesting Measure B fund eligibility – awaiting VTA full response Staff reviewing Embarcadero/Alma near-term options & prior CIP project Major funding applications will follow BPTP location selection
F. Explore establishment of quiet zones at Palo Alto Avenue and elsewhere as applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive updates and provide feedback on quiet zone study for Palo Alto Avenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD, pending Menlo Park's bids/contract award
G. Engage Palo Alto community in all rail planning activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive presentations from outside agencies Receive information from additional community engagement including (PAUSD, Stanford, PABAC, CSTSC, community design experts) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following additional meetings, which are scheduled to occur in Summer/Fall
H. Engage with regional and state agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate and provide updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caltrain Local Policy Makers Group (LPMG) Delegated to Rail Committee VTA Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing