



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

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REPORT TO COUNCIL

SUBJECT

Selection of the Mary Avenue Underpass with Jughandle Option and the Sunnyvale Avenue Underpass Tunnel Option to be Defined as the Proposed Projects for the Grade Separation of Crossings of the Caltrain Railroad Tracks for the Environmental Review

SUMMARY OF COMMISSION ACTION

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission considered the Sunnyvale Avenue location of this item at the regular meeting on July 21, 2022, and the Mary Avenue location of this item at a Special Meeting on August 1, 2022.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission voted to recommend to City Council the Sunnyvale Avenue Bicycle and Pedestrian Tunnel Underpass option with the friendly amendment that if the City Council selects the Sunnyvale Avenue Underpass Tunnel option that a physical barrier between vehicle lanes and bicycle lanes be included in the tunnel. The vote was 5-0, with Commissioner Beagle recused and Commissioner Bonne absent.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission voted to recommend to City Council the Mary Avenue Underpass with Jughandle option with the following friendly amendments:

- Final design be presented to BPAC prior to City Council approval;
- Final design to include a higher level of Active Transportation Plan elements than currently provided in the conceptual design; and
- A study be performed to evaluate the closure for vehicles of Bidwell Avenue at Mary Avenue.

The vote was 4-0, with Chair Mehlinger and Commissioner Hafeman recused and Commissioner Davé absent.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made by posting the Council agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall, at the Sunnyvale Public Library, Senior Center, Community Center and in the Department of Public Safety Lobby. In addition, the agenda and report are available at the Sunnyvale Public Library, Office of the City Clerk and on the City's website.

In addition to the public contact listed above and outreach listed in Reports to Commission No. 22-0628 and No. 22-0791, the following outreach was performed:

- Meetings with Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition - Bike Sunnyvale
- Presentation to Chamber of Commerce Board
- Outreach performed by the Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Association to members and businesses

ALTERNATIVES

1. Selection of the Mary Avenue Underpass option to be defined as the Proposed Project for the grade separation of the Mary Avenue crossing of the Caltrain railroad tracks for the Environmental Review.
2. Selection of the Mary Avenue Underpass with Jughandle option to be defined as the Proposed Project for the grade separation of the Mary Avenue crossing of the Caltrain railroad tracks for the Environmental Review.
3. Selection of the Sunnyvale Avenue Underpass Tunnel option to be defined as the Proposed Project for the grade separation of the Sunnyvale Avenue crossing of the Caltrain railroad tracks for the Environmental Review.
4. Selection of the Sunnyvale Avenue Bicycle and Pedestrian Only Underpass Tunnel option to be defined as the Proposed Project for the grade separation of the Sunnyvale Avenue crossing of the Caltrain railroad tracks for the Environmental Review.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 2: Selection of the Mary Avenue Underpass with Jughandle option to be defined as the Proposed Project for the grade separation of the Mary Avenue crossing of the Caltrain railroad tracks for the Environmental Review.

Alternative 3: Selection of the Sunnyvale Avenue Underpass Tunnel option to be defined as the Proposed Project for the grade separation of the Sunnyvale Avenue crossing of the Caltrain railroad tracks for the Environmental Review.

Staff recommends that the City Council select Alternative 2: the Mary Avenue Underpass with Jughandle option and Alternative 3: the Sunnyvale Avenue Underpass Tunnel option to be defined as the Proposed Projects for the grade separation of crossings of the Caltrain railroad tracks for the environmental review.

At the Mary Avenue crossing, the Underpass with Jughandle option has the following benefits:

- Improves safety by removing the railroad conflict with local traffic modes;
- Decreases noise from rail gates, bells and sounding of train horns;
- Reduces the volumes of vehicle traffic through each jughandle intersection compared to the full Mary-Evelyn avenues intersection;
- Reduces the overall average vehicular delay compared to both the “no build” and the Underpass options;
- Improves or maintains vehicular travel times for Mary Avenue compared to both the “no build” and the Underpass options;
- Decreases the number of points that bicyclists and pedestrians would need to cross vehicle lanes compared to the “no build” and Underpass options;
- Decreases the quantity and severity of private property impacts compared to the Underpass option;
- Decreases the number of private driveway modifications required compared to the Underpass option;
- Decreases the quantity and length of utility relocations required compared to the Underpass option;
- Has a lower anticipated construction duration compared to the Underpass option which would be less disruptive to the local community; and

- Has a lower construction cost compared to the Underpass option.

At the Sunnyvale Avenue crossing, the Underpass Tunnel option has the following benefits:

- Improves safety by removing the railroad conflict with local traffic modes;
- Decreases noise from rail gates, bells and sounding of train horns;
- Reduces or maintains the overall average vehicular delays on the study intersections compared to both the “no build” and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Only options;
- Greatly improves vehicular travel times for Sunnyvale Avenue compared to both the “no build” and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Only options;
- Improves vehicular travel times for Mathilda Avenue compared to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Only option and maintains the vehicular travel times compared to the “no build” option;
- Greatly improves or maintains vehicular travel times for Fair Oaks Avenue compared to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Only option and generally maintains vehicular travel times compared to the “no build” option;
- Provides separate bicycle and pedestrian facility to cross the Caltrain railroad tracks with direct connections to Evelyn and Hendy avenues;
- Facilitates VTA bus service for students attending Fremont High School and to historically underserved areas with less rerouting compared to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Only option;
- Requires less severe rerouting and less travel time impacts to maintain Downtown access and Caltrain Station connectivity;
- Integrates and connects east side of Sunnyvale Avenue to historic Downtown area; and
- Could potentially increase parking in historic Downtown area parking lot, depending upon final design.

Selecting a project to be the Proposed Project for the environmental review under CEQA for both crossings will move the project forward as it will allow the environmental review to be completed. The project ultimately selected for grade separation construction by the City Council as part of environmental study approval may be different than the preferred alternative selected now for starting environmental review.

Prepared by: Angela Obeso, Principal Transportation Engineer

Reviewed by: Dennis Ng, Traffic and Transportation Manager

Reviewed by: Chip Taylor, Director of Public Works

Reviewed by: Teri Silva, Assistant City Manager

Approved by: Kent Steffens, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. Report to Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission [22-0628, July 21, 2022] (without attachments)
2. Report to Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission [22-0791, August 1, 2022] (without attachments)

Additional Attachments for Report to Council

3. Excerpt of Draft Minutes of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission Meeting of July 21, 2022
4. Draft Minutes of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission Special Meeting of August

1, 2022

5. Survey results, June 13 through July 31, 2022
6. Draft Sunnyvale Grade Separation Feasibility Study, dated August 2022