



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item

15-0686

Agenda Date: 1/29/2016

2016 COUNCIL STUDY ISSUE

NUMBER

DPW 14-13

TITLE Scoping of Grade Separations for Caltrain Crossings at Mary Avenue and Sunnyvale Avenue

BACKGROUND

Lead Department: Public Works
Support Department(s): N/A

Sponsor(s):

Councilmembers: Whittum, Meyering

History:

1 year ago: Deferred

2 years ago: Deferred

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

What are the key elements of the study?

This study would evaluate grade separations of the current at-grade crossings of Caltrain at Mary Avenue and Sunnyvale Avenue. The study would identify alternatives, costs, and limitations; over vs. under separation; right-of-way requirements; roadway operations, and potential environmental issues. Alternative concepts such as commute-hour reversible lanes could be considered. Commute hour capacity improvement due to grade separation would be evaluated to determine if roadway reconfiguration/lane reduction could be considered as an economizing measure.

What precipitated this study?

There is a perception that significant congestion and queuing results from commute hour crossing gate downtime. This may be exacerbated in the future with increased train frequency. Grade separations have the potential to reduce delay and increase safety for all travel modes at rail crossings.

Planned Completion Year: 2018

FISCAL IMPACT

Cost to Conduct Study

Level of staff effort required (opportunity cost): Major

Amount of funding above current budget required: \$500,000

Funding Source: Will seek budget supplement.

Explanation of Cost:

Consultant services for coordination with Caltrain, conceptual design, cost estimating, environmental evaluation, and public outreach. As with all projects staff will be responsible for managing the consultant contract, reviewing and approving the conceptual designs and estimates, review the environmental documents, and participate in the public outreach process. In addition, staff will need to communicate with Caltrain and execute agreements as needed.

Cost to Implement Study Results

Unknown. Study would include assessment of potential costs.

EXPECTED PARTICIPATION IN THE PROCESS

Council-approved work plan: Yes

Council Study Session: Yes

Reviewed by Boards/Commissions: Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission, Planning Commission

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Position: Support

Explanation: Staff had previously expected that many of the issues proposed to be studied would be further evaluated by Caltrain as part of the modernization project or would be further evaluated by the California High Speed Rail Authority. Although some analysis has already occurred regarding the impacts of gate downtime, grade separation configurations, and right of way impacts, additional work is still required to better understand feasibility and costs. Staff has met with both High Speed Rail and Caltrain staff and determined that, at this time, the City must proceed with a separate study to further understand the issues and costs related to grade separations. Caltrain has expressed interest in working with the City to further develop these plans. The timing is appropriate as there is a possibility that if the proposed 2016 transportation tax measure passes, funding for Caltrain grade separations might be available.

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