



# City of Sunnyvale

## Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

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Study Session Summary of March 28, 2017 - Presentation and Update by Caltrain Staff on the Caltrain Modernization Program

**Call to Order:** Vice Mayor Gustav Larsson called the meeting to order at 6:24 p.m.

**City Councilmembers Present:**

Mayor Glenn Hendricks  
Vice Mayor Gustav Larsson  
Councilmember Jim Griffith  
Councilmember Larry Klein  
Councilmember Nancy Smith  
Councilmember Russ Melton  
Councilmember Michael Goldman

**City Councilmembers Absent:**

None

**Study Session Summary:**

Transportation and Traffic Manager, Ria Hutabarat Lo introduced Casey Fromson, Director of Government and Community Affairs at Caltrain. Ms. Fromson then provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Caltrain modernization project including the growth of bi-directional ridership, passenger crowding, aging rolling stock, and businesses support for modernization within the Caltrain corridor. She also outlined the goals, features, and opportunities with regard to the electrification project. Finally, Ms. Casey outlined the progress in meeting all the requirements of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Core Capacity grant, as well as recent developments with the new Federal Minister expressing that she is not ready to sign the documents to execute this grant.

Councilmembers asked questions, made comments, and requested additional information as summarized below along with Caltrain responses:

Councilmember Smith asked about contingency plans if the federal secretary for transportation needs more than four months to decide on this issue?

- Caltrain is working hard on Plan A to make sure that the federal secretary says yes. In terms of a Plan B, it would be difficult to extend the Limited Notice to Proceed (LNTP) and contracts further, and so Caltrain is looking at what it would mean to terminate the contract including replacing the aging diesel fleet.

Councilmember Goldman asked about the association with High Speed Rail (HSR). On the one hand, how tied is this project to HSR and, on the other hand, what would happen if HSR does not proceed?

- Caltrain Electrification and California High Speed Rail have always been separate. Caltrain is

the project sponsor for electrification and the project stands on its own for merit, regardless of whether HSR comes in 5 years or 15 years. There is also a court case affirming this. Caltrain has agreements from HSR that they will provide some funds for it. They would be breaking contracts if they fail to provide these funds, but the two projects are distinct.

Mayor Hendricks asked what can the City do to advocate for this project?

- Caltrain will provide potential ideas including a letter to the federal minister that the mayor may wish to sign.

Vice Mayor Larsson asked what other options are being considered to increase capacity?

- Caltrain purchased some Metro diesel trains as a short-term fix to alleviate crowding, but electrification is really the big goal.

Vice Mayor Larsson also asked what options open up in association with the transition from Union Pacific (UP) to a new short-line freight operator?

- UP has trackage rights to operate along the Caltrain corridor. UP is the lead in setting up who will take their place. Several communities have suggested the need for different standards such as more than 1% maximum grade (2% may open new grade separation options) and lower horn placement. The RFP is a 9- to 12-month process. It's unclear whether this would happen as part of that or later.
- There are opportunities for Cities to communicate this interest to UP. Contact Francisco Castillo, Director of Public Affairs by email [fcastillo@up.com](mailto:fcastillo@up.com) <<mailto:fcastillo@up.com>> or by phone at (916) 789-5957.

### **Public Comment:**

Public speakers made the following comments:

- One member of the public said that he was imagining communities densifying populations to accommodate all this mass transit.
- Another member of the public asked why Caltrain was pursuing overhead electrification rather than ground level. Casey responded that at ground level electrification with a third rail requires full grade separation, however, Caltrain currently has 42 at-grade crossings along the right-of-way.

### **Adjournment:**

Vice Mayor Gustav Larsson adjourned the meeting at 5:50 p.m.

Prepared by Ria Hutabarat Lo, Transportation and Traffic Manager, Public Works