

Questions for Caltrain

Initial draft 2020-01-13

Note: I am going to try to chair this meeting so that Sebastian isn't answering every question everyone has ever had related to Caltrain - and instead is focused on answering questions we have as XCAP members that we feel we'd really need to understand in order to make formal recommendations. I will reiterate that, similar to the consultants, Sebastian Petty and Caltrain are going through their own planning exercises and many answers might end up being - we don't know yet but we're working on it. I also understand, however, that some folks need to understand Caltrain a bit better - so we need to leave some space for folks getting up to speed.

With that in mind, are these questions what we need to know to make a decision?

Caltrain operations now

1. Is there any reason that Caltrain can't increase schedules to 6 trains/hour in each direction before electrification is complete, to alleviate overcrowding and standees on many trains?
2. Why doesn't Caltrain run more midday service now?

Electrification Construction Schedule

1. Is the overall electrification project on schedule? If not, what is the new estimated completion date?
2. What are the risks to the schedule?

Caltrain Operations After Electrification

1. According to best information, current Caltrain funding is sufficient for new EMU trainsets to replace only 75% of the current fleet. Is this true? How much of the current fleet of diesel engines and diesel-hauled coaches will remain in operation to support current schedules? Are there any plans to get funding to replace the remaining 25% of the diesel engine and coach fleet with EMU trainsets?
2. How is mixing diesel and electric expected to impact the schedules in the short term and does this delay more frequent midday service until Caltrain is fully electrified?
3. How much of the current fleet of engines and coaches will be needed to cover a service increase to 6 trains/hour/direction? Are there any plans to get funding for the additional EMU trainsets needed?
4. How will diesel-engine powered trains affect overall schedules as headways are reduced, since diesel engine powered trains cannot accelerate or decelerate as fast EMU trainsets?
5. How many years until the current EMD F40-PH2 or the MPI MP36PH-3C engines reach end of life? Will they be replaced with new diesel engines or with EMU trainsets?
6. We know Caltrain plans to run more trains once electrified and the Business Plan shows Caltrain will run much more frequent all day service in the future. When will Caltrain release information of

what happens in the in between (2023 - ?) When might midday service significantly increase? We are trying to understand when we will “feel the pain” of gridlock - so any understanding of even the process to determine the service post 2023 is helpful.

Passing Tracks in South Palo Alto

1. What is our contingency plan if we need passing lane(s) in Palo Alto? How do we get some more definitive information about four-tracking requirements from Caltrain?
2. Caltrain has said they would like cities to select an alternative that doesn't “preclude” four tracks - which of these options doesn't preclude 4 tracks: viaduct, hybrid, trench, tunnel?
3. Can we overlay any possible future four-track passing sections against the current maps of alternatives?
4. If passing tracks are required as part of a grade crossing separation design, will Caltrain pay for the incremental cost of design and construction? Ongoing maintenance?
5. Will Caltrain share costs for a four-track alternative, in advance of when Caltrain would actually need to use the passing tracks?
6. How could a trench or a viaduct be widened to accommodate 4 tracks?

Business Plan and Overall Planning

1. Does Caltrain intend to develop a comprehensive plan for replacement of all the grade crossings between San Francisco and San Jose?
2. Does Caltrain intend to develop a funding mechanism to support such a comprehensive plan?
3. Are there state and local agencies that we can work with better so that we are all planning a regional solution rather than a town-by-town solution?
4. In the absence of a comprehensive plan, does Caltrain intend to provide assistance to crossing elimination projects, city by city?
5. On average, what percentage of funding have cities contributed to grade separations in the past? What was the main source of funding for these grade separations historically? Has any tax measure ever been raised just to pay for grade separations (and not other general transit capital projects)?
6. Are there any legal requirements for Embarcadero grade separation to continue to include a Stanford stop (if changed in the future for any reason)? Who is responsible for Stanford Station? Does the City or Caltrain have an arrangement with Stanford that must be considered? **Are there any scenarios contemplated in Caltrain's business plan service vision that continue to provide service to the Stanford station?**
7. If a viaduct or a tunnel is built, can the City have amenities, such as bike paths, as part of an easement, or would all of the land be controlled by Caltrain. If there are no amenities, is Caltrain accountable to control weeds, graffiti, etc.?
8. If existing tracks are removed **for viaducts or tunnels**, will Caltrain create bike paths? If not, what is the intended use of this space?

9. Is there anything that regulates how long of a stretch between crossover switches? Is there a requirement for the maximum spacing in miles between crossover switches?
10. Are there any large projects that are in the works but have not been completed that might change the technical requirements (like 1% grade) on the Caltrain corridor in the future in a way that could impact our decision? For example, is there a plan to remove freight that is in the works but has stagnated? What is the likelihood of any surprises through the design review process (re Caltrain, etc.)?
11. Has Caltrain developed standards for tunnels that have only electric trains (same standards that will be used for going into TransBay terminal),? If not, when are they expected?
12. How will Union Pacific (or a future short line operator) operate trains on a 2% grade? More power on each train, or shorter trains? What would be the noise impact of more power or engines operating at full throttle on a 2% grade?
13. Will Caltrain be ready to speak about Union Pacific Railroad exceptions related to freight?
14. For design exceptions such as 2% vertical grades, is the City required to negotiate with Caltrain, or can the City negotiate directly with Union Pacific RR?

Documents for Chantal to give to XCAP prior to meeting:

- 1) Letter from Caltrain to HSR re: who pays for passing tracks if/when HSR comes to the Peninsula
- 2) Letter from Mayor Sam Liccardo and former Mayor Ed Lee asking UP to consider requiring a short-line operator to allow 2% grade
- 3) Excerpt of Caltrain Organizational Assessment (starting page 89) describing the two entities Caltrain is considering for dealing with Grade Separations
- 4) Do we have some document that is an "guide to Caltrain" for newbies that might be useful for XCAPers to read before the meeting? Something that explains the board make up and how they don't have dedicated funding in a succinct and readable way??