

Caltrain Follow-Up Regarding Shoofly – Discussed at 5/20/2020 XCAP meeting

From: Reggiardo, Melissa <reggiardom@samtrans.com>

Sent: Monday, May 18, 2020 2:29 PM

To: Kamhi, Philip <Philip.Kamhi@CityofPaloAlto.org>

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Subject: RE: Encroachment at Churchill

Hi Philip,

I hope this email finds you all well.

I'm finally getting back to the second question in your previous email:

2. Lastly, what would it take for Caltrain to say no shoofly is needed of that some other construction method would be considered or allowed?

In order to make a determination, Caltrain would need more information on construction sequencing so as to understand associated operating impacts in detail. This would include determining the extent of proposed closures and single tracking, including the duration of these events. Decisions related to whether or not Caltrain would accept certain operational impacts to accommodate the construction of a specific, local project are ultimately a system-wide policy issue. In terms of construction sequencing, Caltrain would need to examine designs and construction phasing plans (approximately 15 percent or conceptual planning phase). Part of Caltrain's design review would also focus on the ability of the project to build abutments and drive piles within a safe distance from electrified system components.

Also of note is that Caltrain staff believe that such construction scenarios will likely take longer to build while construction in an electrified environment will introduce more complexity.

In advance of reviewing a detailed proposal, Caltrain staff generally believe that there is a low probability that such a request would be approved. Should the City decide to provide the level of design detail needed for Caltrain to undertake a more detailed review, the City and railroad would need to discuss the substantial level of effort needed to review such a request and the associated agreements and funding commitments that would be required. In the absence of the required design detail or a formal review, the default answer to such a question would be no.

At early stages of project development – when many alternatives are being considered and detailed review by the railroad has yet to occur – we generally encourage communities to adhere to established railroad standards and construction methodologies as they develop concepts and alternatives. While this is a conservative approach, doing anything less heightens the risk that project impacts or costs may be understated at this early stage and that decisions may be made based on overly optimistic assumptions.

Caltrain is planning to undertake a corridor-wide grade separation analysis over the coming years that will comprehensively address issues like standards and alternative construction methodologies on a system-wide scale. We encourage Palo Alto to engage in this process and hope to begin the effort in the second half of 2020.

As always, let us know if you want to discuss further.

Thanks,
Melissa