

From: Bhatia, Ripon
Sent: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 11:35 AM
To: ORG - Clerk's Office
Subject: FW: Questions regarding Caltrain slides for today's 3/19 PA Rail Committee meeting

FYI,

Email/comment received today. Thanks

Best,
Ripon

From: Adrian Brandt
Sent: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 11:23 AM
To: Lythcott-Haims, Julie ; Burt, Patrick; Robert Barnard; Veenker, Vicki
Cc: Bhatia, Ripon; Kamhi, Philip
Subject: Questions regarding Caltrain slides for today's 3/19 PA Rail Committee meeting

Some people who received this message don't often get email from adrian.brandt@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

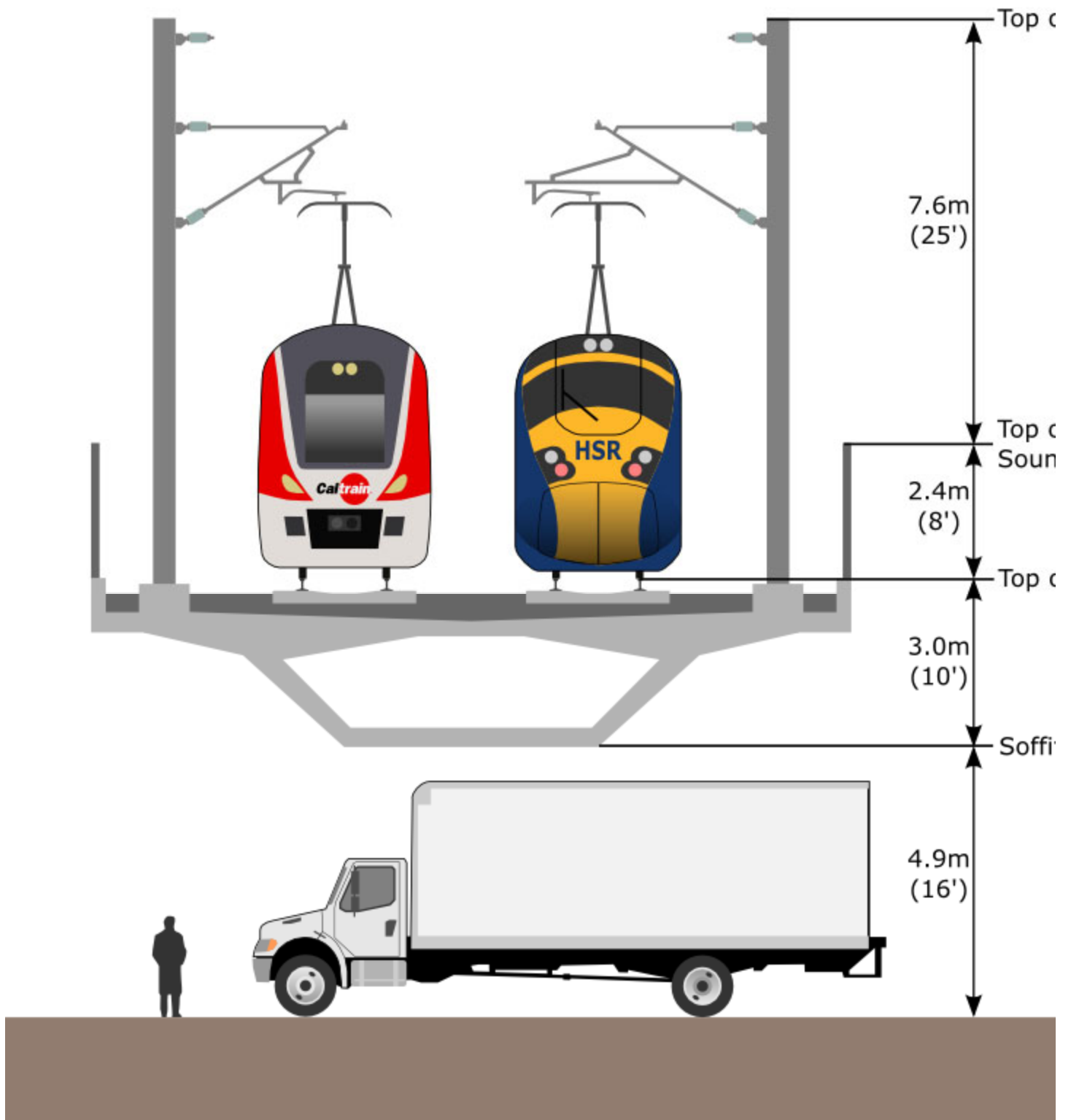
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Honorable Mr. Rob Barnard and members of the Palo Alto Rail Committee,

While it is clear Caltrain ROW width preservation is a key theme, bridges over streets seem needlessly wide, incorporating cost-increasing luxury features such as space for track-adjacent "maintenance roads" that are unprecedented on all other Caltrain grade separations and past & present bridge replacements (eg Jerrold Ave bridge, San Mateo bridges, Guadalupe River bridges).

To minimize their width, cost, and impact, standard railroad practice around the world is to assume use of track-mounted (aka "hi-rail") maintenance equipment on bridges.

Why on earth isn't Caltrain using a clearance-maximizing, structure-depth-minimizing, U-shaped through-girder design for the viaduct (or at least for bridges over streets)?



Standard single cell box girder bridge

(Source: <https://caltrain-hsr.blogspot.com/2015/11/the-u-shaped-grade-separation.html>)

Why don't temporary shoofly track pairs use 2-track cantilevered catenary support poles (instead of center poles) to minimize track center spacing and therefore overall shoofly width and intrusion impacts on Alma?

Similarly, why don't the permanent viaducts & bridges use outside (vs. center) catenary support poles to minimize track center spacing, structure widths and costs?

Why is the viaduct the only alternative saddled (sandbagged?) with retaining (vs. eliminating) the two existing at-grade tracks post-construction for a total of 4 tracks?

Why does the viaduct proposed for Palo Alto retain at-grade tracks (and therefore at-grade street crossings) "for railroad purposes" when all public presentations and published drawings for the planned viaduct across Redwood City do no such thing, and instead have city residents and planners excitedly envisioning community-reconnecting & -serving "activation" and reuse of the newly-created space under the viaduct (as with new grade separation viaducts in Melbourne or Toronto, etc., or as with the beautiful path-lined and landscaped Ohlone Greenway underneath the BART viaduct between Berkeley and El Cerrito)?

Lastly, an error:

Caltrain's presentation slides for today's Palo Alto Rail Committee meeting incorrectly state:

"Provide a minimum 15'-6" vertical clearance with variance and sacrificial beams **across entire width of Railroad ROW**"

That should be: "across the entire width of the **street** ROW."

And on that topic, I would note that since Redwood City opened its busy downtown Jefferson Street underpass grade separation in 1999 (for only \$15m!) that despite only offering 14'6" clearance (without a sacrificial beam), I am unaware of problems (let alone a single instance) of a tall vehicle striking the unblemished painted concrete underside edge of the bridge (see image, courtesy of Google Maps "street view"):

01:24 Tue Mar 19



Thoughtfully and with kind regards,
Adrian Brandt

From: Transportation
Sent: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 1:16 PM
To: Bhatia, Ripon; Kamhi, Philip
Cc: Transportation; ORG - Clerk's Office
Subject: FW: Mar 19 Rail Committee comment

Forwarding along email for today's RC meeting; it was also sent to CC and not sure if Clerk's office received it.

Thank you

Andria Sumpter
Administrative Assistant, Office of Transportation

From: Laura Granka
Sent: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 9:58 AM
To: Transportation; Council, City
Subject: Mar 19 Rail Committee comment

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Hello,

Below is my public comment/ feedback in advance of today's Mar 19th rail meeting as I cannot attend live. Thank you for your time.

First, thank you for the quick progress on grade Separation feedback: A big thank you to the transportation team and rail committee for processing the Caltrain feedback and readying proposals for the upcoming grant timelines. I appreciate the urgency of the transportation team in working through these details, and hope that committee and city can carry this momentum.

Based on Caltrain's feedback, it looks like the most viable options right now are for the Churchill crossing, and while this crossing was initially deprioritized, it would still be a huge benefit to the city to continue forward progress, at least with the grant studies, especially for a crossing in such close proximity to a school.

Quiet zone study: A request (on behalf of myself and neighbors) that City Council please approve the rail *quiet zone study* when it comes to council. While the September electrification of Caltrain will have many benefits, one consequence is that *weekend passenger service will double*, significantly increasing noise along the corridor. A quiet zone, and eventual grade separations, will serve to retain quality of life and equity for those near the rail corridor, and this study is the first step to assess what will be required.

Churchill crossing signal. I heard in the last committee meeting that Caltrain is investigating a faulty signal at Churchill crossing. I wish I had reported this sooner; it has been falsely triggering for at least the past year, at least 2-3 times a day, compounding the already backed-up traffic.

Minor suggestion for Churchill partial underpass: A public commenter in a recent meeting suggested that Alma NB become one lane near the Churchill crossing, to preserve the tree canopy along Alma, which is proposed to be

eliminated to accommodate the partial underpass. I suggested this last year: given Alma NB becomes one lane almost immediately after Churchill (for the Embarcadero bridge), this solution would just extend that single lane for a slightly longer stretch. Traffic impacts should be minimal, and should still be preferred over removing the entire tree canopy for ~7 blocks.

Thank you again for all of your work and progress,
Laura Granka
Churchill Ave resident