



Dear Mayor and Council Members:

On behalf of City Manager Ed Shikada, please find below the staff responses to questions from Councilmember Tanaka regarding the [Monday, May 22 Council Meeting](#) consent agenda items.

**Item 6: Approve the Services Agreement between the City of Palo Alto and the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (Caltrain) for the Connecting Palo Alto Grade Separation Projects and Authorize the City Manager to Execute the Agreement; CEQA status – not a project.**

- 1. The staff report states that the Services Agreement between Palo alto and Caltrain will cost \$106,677 for Caltrain to provide technical input on the conceptual designs of rail grade separations. Could you provide a breakdown of how this money will be used to support the City in different ways, and what specific technical input will Caltrain provide with this money?**

**Staff response:** The scope of work entails the initial coordination and assessment of the preliminary conceptual plans prepared by the City for three crossings: Churchill Avenue, Meadow Drive, and Charleston Road. Presently, there are five alternatives being evaluated. Caltrain personnel will conduct a technical evaluation and offer feedback in accordance with Caltrain Planning and Design criteria as the City determines the preferred alternative(s). Caltrain is presently engaged in the development and updating of their standards as a result of corridor electrification. The early review will identify any potential impacts and take into account the specific Caltrain facilities in this initial project phase. The breakdown of costs can be found in Appendix B of the Service Agreement, which outlines various categories such as Project Delivery, Infrastructure Engineering, Planning, and Environmental considerations.

- 2. The report states that the funding for this work can be partially found in the Railroad Grade Separation and Safety Improvements project, and the other portion will be considered during the FY2024 budget process. In the case that the funding is not available in the FY2024 budget, how will the City move forward with the project and what will happen to the remaining funds?**

**Staff response:** The funding request for this scope is minimal considering the scope of the overall project. There is adequate funding allocated in the FY 23 and in the proposed FY 24 budget. Also, City plans to amend existing VTA agreement for reimbursement of these costs from Measure B Grade Separation funding.

- 3. Why is input from Caltrain needed now and not during the start of the Connecting Palo Alto Grade Separation Project, where specifics and technical input about the railroads could have been used by CAP and XCAP to do more research and develop proposed alternatives?**

**Staff response:** As Caltrain manages an operating railway, their input and consideration is valuable throughout every phase of the project. Although there was informal input during the XCAP and CAP review processes, the input received was limited due to the constrained staff resources at Caltrain. This agreement establishes a mechanism and process for the City and Caltrain to collaborate and conduct a formal review, allowing for a more comprehensive and structured evaluation.

**Item 7: Approval of Amendment No. 1 to Contract No. S20178516 with Hohbach-Lewin, Inc. to increase compensation by \$10,000 and to extend the Contract Term through March 30, 2026 for On-Call Structural Engineering Services for various Public Art Installations; CEQA Status – Not a Project.**

- 1. What specific projects will the additional money be used for, and how has the money previously been used- specific art installations, projects, etc?**

**Staff response:** Hohbach-Lewin has been instrumental in consulting the Public Art Program staff and project artists on a range of services (including providing input on artwork design to ensure compatibility and constructability for the desired location, and preparing calculations for public art projects for display purposes that are required by the City's Public Works and Buildings Depts) for the implementation of temporary public art installations for a variety of projects, including King Artist-in-Residence program and the Code:ART public art festival installations. The past projects include:

- Community Advice by Susan O'Malley (temporary installation on Embarcadero Road),
- *Arbor* by Adam Marcus (temporary public art for King Plaza),
- *Paleoalto* by Marpi Studio (temporary new media interactive installation for Code:ART 2021);
- *I See You, I Hear You, I Honor You* by Rayos Magos (temporary public art installation for King Artist-In-Residence Program).

Without the structural engineering services provided by Hohbach-Lewin none of these temporary public art project would have been possible due to their limited budgets. The Public Art Program staff relies on the services provided by Hohbach-Lewin, Inc to create impactful installations of high artistic value designed and fabricated to provide the safety and protection of the project, the general public, City staff, surrounding structures and elements due to wind, seismic, or other typical potential hazards. In the next three years, the Public Art Program will rely on the services by Hohbach-Lewin for the main art installation for Code:ART 2023, temporary public art installation for the ongoing King AIR artist; large scale digital projections event in downtown Palo Alto, and other temporary public art projects.

- 2. What are the rates of the company, and how does this compare with other companies in this area, since the rates were not included in the staff report?**

**Staff response:** Rates were provided as Exhibit C-1 to the staff report (packet page 68). These rates are competitive with other structural engineering firms in the Bay Area and beyond.

- 3. Why choose this company (which is specialized in architecture with art as a subset) rather than one focused on art installations?**

**Staff response:** Hohbach-Lewin has previous experience in consulting on the integration of temporary and permanent public art installations in buildings and public places. There is only a handful of structural engineering consultants across the US who specialize in art installations and public art.

4. Since we chose Hohbach-Lewin in 2020 because they were the only company to reach out to us during that time, is it an option to look at the rates of other companies further and then decide on the contract?

**Staff response:** Since this is a very specialized area of expertise, Staff do not feel that going out to bid for another RFP would result in better or more efficient services. Public Art Program staff has an ongoing agreement with Hohbach-Lewin and an established working relationship with the engineering team who have in-depth understanding of both requirements for the design and placement of temporary public artworks as well as specific site requirements and restrictions. Adding funds to the existing contact would allow to the Public Art Program continue to implement its programming in the most time- and cost-effective manner.