



## City Council Staff Report

**From: City Manager**

**Report Type: CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Lead Department: Transportation**

**Meeting Date: May 22, 2023**

Report #:2304-1237

### **TITLE**

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.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Rail Committee and Staff recommend the City Council approve the Services Agreement between the City of Palo Alto and Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (PCJPB/Caltrain) in the amount of \$106,677 for Caltrain to provide technical input on the conceptual designs of rail grade separations of the Connecting Palo Alto Grade Separation Project and authorize the City Manager or their designee to execute the agreement.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Connecting Palo Alto rail grade separation project involves working on the active railroad crossings owned and operated by Peninsula Corridor Joint Power Board (Caltrain). Therefore, the project requires coordination with Caltrain as the City undertakes the conceptual design phase for selecting preferred alternative(s). This agreement between the City of Palo Alto and Caltrain will allow for Caltrain to provide technical comments in compliance with Caltrain planning and design criteria as the City selects the preferred alternative(s), and to set up a process for developing the cooperative agreement for future project development.

The Rail Committee has reviewed the proposed Service Agreement between the City of Palo Alto and Caltrain on April 26, 2023 and unanimously recommend approval of the Agreement to the City Council.

### **BACKGROUND**

Rail Grade Separation at crossings in Palo Alto along the Caltrain corridor is an ongoing project. Over the past several years, the City has been working on developing conceptual plans to review various alternatives for rail grade separations at the three crossings of Churchill Avenue,

Meadow Drive, and Charleston Road.

With the support of consultants and community input, project alternatives were developed and reviewed with the goal of selecting the preferred alternative for grade separation at these crossings. A Citizen Advisory Panel (CAP) was created in 2018 for advising staff and consultants on developing alternatives, improving community outreach, and communications efforts, and the Expanded Community Advisory Panel (XCAP) was created in 2019 for the evaluation of the Connecting Palo Alto railroad grade separation alternatives at the three crossings.

In 2021 after receiving XCAP recommendations, the City Council selected the preferred alternative and backup alternative for Churchill Avenue and narrowed alternatives in consideration to the three alternatives at Meadow Drive and Charleston Road. In addition, the Council directed staff to perform additional studies to further assist the review of the alternatives in consideration for the selection of preferred alternative(s) and reinitiated the Rail Committee. Staff is currently working on the refinement of partial underpass alternative at Churchill Avenue, Underpass Alternatives at Meadow Drive and Charleston, and conducting additional studies that would assist in further review of the alternatives.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Rail Grade Separation Project involves working on the active railroad crossings owned and operated by Peninsula Corridor Joints Power Board (Caltrain). Therefore, the project requires coordination with Caltrain as the City undertakes the conceptual design phase for the selection of preferred alternative(s).

This coordination will support the review of the conceptual plans for compliance with Caltrain planning and design criteria and other documentation in the early phase of the project development. Additional Agreements and/or Amendments will be necessary as the City progresses towards completion of the project. These future Agreements and/or Amendments will include updated schedules and budgets as appropriate. Therefore, future Agreements and/or Amendments may include but may not limited to the following tasks:

- ***Coordination during Advanced Conceptual Design/Preliminary Design (Up to 15% Design):*** Caltrain planning coordination, technical review and comments of advanced design alternatives (LPAs) further developed by the City, if needed, prior to Preliminary Engineering/Environmental Clearance phase.
- ***Alternative Contract Delivery Analysis*** to recommend the optimal contract delivery method based on the selected LPAs' unique characteristics and complexities. Document recommendations in an Alternative Project Delivery Decision Report.
- ***Development of a Cooperative Agreement*** to address funding, roles and responsibilities, budgets, and schedule for the subsequent phases.

- ***Development of the Request For Proposals (RFP/s)*** for advancing the project to the subsequent phases in accordance with the consensus alternative delivery method recommendation. The scope of work for the RFPs will vary as necessary based on the recommended contract delivery method selected for the project.

Based on the Caltrain review and comments, additional work may be required to perform changes to the project plans, profiles, renderings, studies, other associated documents, and prepare submittals required for finalizing the Local Preferred Alternative and completion of the final conceptual design phase package. The scope of work in the existing contract with AECOM Consultants does not cover this work. Therefore, staff will need to procure the services of the consultant through an amendment to the existing contract of the consultant, obtain a new consultant to perform this additional work, or integrate it into future phases of project design. Also, staff will coordinate with the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) for an amendment to the existing agreement to include this work for funding through the 2016 Measure B Grade Separation funding.

On April 26, 2023, the Rail Committee reviewed the proposed Service Agreement between the City of Palo Alto and Caltrain and unanimously recommended approval of the agreement to the City Council. Therefore, staff recommends that the City Council approves the Service Agreement with Caltrain and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement.

#### **RESOURCE IMPACT**

Funding to accommodate a portion of this work through Fiscal Year 2023 is available in the Railroad Grade Separation and Safety Improvements project (PL-17001). Funding for the remaining portion of the agreement will be considered during the Fiscal Year 2024 budget process, and funding for amendments to the agreement and/or future agreements will be requested as needed or appropriated through the annual budget process.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The recommendation in this report does not constitute a project in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act and is therefore not subject to environmental review.

#### **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

This agreement will provide a formal structure for Caltrain to provide technical comments on the rail crossing alternatives as the City moves forward on selecting a preferred alternative(s). The agreement was discussed at the Rail Committee's regular meeting on April 26, 2023 where public comment was taken.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: Services Agreement

**APPROVED BY:**

Philip Kamhi, Chief Transportation Official