



## SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

**Date:** 7/16/2019

**Time:** 5:00 p.m.

**City Hall/Administration Building – “Downtown” Conference Room, 1<sup>st</sup> floor  
701 Laurel St., Menlo Park, CA 94025**

### A. Call to Order

Mayor Mueller called the meeting to order at 5:18 p.m.

### B. Roll Call

**Present:** Mueller, Combs

**Absent:** None

**Staff:** Senior Transportation Engineer Angela Obeso, Assistant Public Works Director Nikki Nagaya, Senior Project Manager Morad Fakhrai, City Manager Starla Jerome-Robinson

### C. Regular Business

- C1. Approve the City Council Rail Subcommittee special meeting minutes of April 22, 2019 meeting (attachment)

By acclimation, the Subcommittee approved the minutes.

- C2. Recommend to City Council proposed updates to the City’s rail policy and position statement (Staff Report #19-003-CC RS)

Staff Nagaya provided a presentation (Attachment).

- Mickie Winkler spoke recommending a phased approach to providing rail service, with service between Redwood City and Willow Road as a first phase.
- Henry Riggs spoke concurring with a phased approach to providing rail service, and recommending a second stop in Menlo Park be considered at Marsh Road near Marsh Manor to better serve Lorelei Manor, Flood Triangle and Friendly Acres.
- Ken Southerland spoke in support of the additions referencing residential quality of life and asked a question regarding treatments for pedestrian crossings near railroad crossings.
- Adrian Brandt spoke in support of a shared use pathway adjacent to the rail and recommended not requiring grade separations as a condition of the Dumbarton corridor project.
- Jen Wolosin shared that she attended a Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition tour of SMART Rail in Marin County with many parallels to the potential shared use pathway adjacent to the Dumbarton corridor. She recommended better defining residential quality of life. She also requested that the staff report be revised in reference to the Dumbarton corridor meeting at the Menlo Park Senior Center, as more than “several” residents attended the meeting.
- Drew (last name not provided) spoke requesting that the proposed transit service diagram from the Circulation Element, as shown in the presentation, be amended to show service on the Dumbarton wye (rail junction) connecting south on the Caltrain corridor. He also recommended revisions to the rail policy regarding maximizing service in Menlo Park, as express or skip-stop

service may provide a better service to Menlo Park than if every train stopped at the Menlo Park station.

- Steve Van Pelt spoke requesting a revision to Circulation Element policy CIRC-5.3 in the staff report remove reference to “commuter” rail, recommended considering buses in the Dumbarton corridor as a first phase, and requested rail service be electrified.

Mayor Mueller facilitated a Subcommittee discussion and the following direction was provided:

- Revise the staff report description of the Dumbarton corridor meeting at the Menlo Park Senior Center
- Revise the reference to the provision of a sound wall adjacent to the Dumbarton corridor in the rail policy and position statement
- Maintain residential quality of life in the draft rail policy
- Itemize the remaining comments for consideration when the policy is brought forward to the City Council

C. Provide direction on next steps for the Ravenswood Avenue Railroad Crossing project (Staff Report #19-004-CC-RS)

Staff Obeso provided a presentation (Attachment).

- Steve Schmidt requested clarification on the status of the tunnel scope, as Palo Alto recently removed a citywide tunnel from further consideration. He requested the scope of study of a fully elevated grade separation option be broadened to start at the northern City border with the Town of Atherton to minimize impacts on safety, circulation. He also requested that a fully elevated option could consider closing Encinal Avenue completely, or to vehicle traffic while maintaining pedestrian and bicycle access. He stated this alternative should be compared objectively to other feasible alternatives in the environmental review phase.
- Ken Southerland stated that an elevated railroad structure does not belong next to residential uses. He requested that the scope be amended to produce similar examples that are comparable to Menlo Park prior to embarking on a detailed engineering evaluation to be more cost effective. He also requested that visual simulations be prepared showing what a fully elevated structure would look like from a resident’s back yard.
- Jen Wolosin requested clarification on what is proposed to be studied in regard to a fully elevated option. She also spoke in support of removing a tunnel from further consideration, as the cost is great and the urban-style densities needed to support financing such a proposal were too great. She also requested equal consideration of potential impacts for all residential units, whether single- or multi-family.
- Henry Riggs spoke requesting a standard measure for criteria in reference to the alternatives comparison chart, emphasizing the need for east-west connectivity. He supported elimination of a tunnel from further consideration. He also requested the scope of work for further study of a fully elevated option be amended to provide a menu of options to achieve the goals of a fully elevated alternative: Improving connectivity, minimizing excavation, reducing the construction schedule, and preventing unknowns due to utility relocation costs. He also requested clarification whether the scope of work anticipated that Encinal could rise minimally, to maintain an at-grade crossing, and that Transportation staff in lieu of the technical consultant prepare the analysis. He also inquired about options for aesthetic improvements for all grade separation options.
- Katie Behroozi spoke in support of the connectivity improvements that are incorporated into the hybrid or split elevation alternative. She also inquired about options for aesthetic improvements for all grade separation options.

- Adrian Brandt shared information regarding the service levels under consideration in the Caltrain Business Plan, and recommended that a plan for eliminating the at-grade crossing at Encinal Avenue be incorporated to address safety and horn noise considerations. He also described a method used to estimate an approximate height of the rail tracks at Encinal Avenue if rise in elevation began at the Atherton border, suggesting a structure could not achieve significant elevation due to design limitations of the required rail vertical curves (no more than approximately 10 feet high structure would be possible, according to Mr. Brandt). He also spoke regarding the potential construction impacts and utility relocations.
- Mickie Winkler spoke in support of adding a consideration of closing Encinal Avenue to the study.
- Drew (last name not provided) spoke regarding construction impacts and the potential to consider a single shoofly track in lieu of two tracks.

Mayor Mueller facilitated a Subcommittee discussion and the following direction was provided:

- Eliminate the tunnel option from further study in the scope of work, given the information provided by Professor Steven Bennon of the Stanford Global Projects Center at the May 21, 2019 City Council meeting
- Concur with geographic segments presented based on adjacent land uses to evaluate the options in the future
- Incorporate the ability to provide a menu/iterative analysis of possible fully elevated options, including starting rise of the railroad tracks at Atherton border and nearer to Encinal Avenue, into the scope of work and evaluate the pros and cons of each
- Include assessment of beautification/aesthetic improvements options and a cost comparison to “base” case
- Include assessment of construction impacts in each alternative

C4. Update on Middle Avenue Pedestrian and Bicycle Crossing project (attachment)

Mayor Mueller left the meeting at 6:26pm, but requested informational updates continue and Councilmember Combs facilitate public comment and discussion, as no further Subcommittee direction was requested.

Staff Obeso provided the presentation (Attachment).

- Steve Van Pelt inquired about coordination with Caltrain electrification.
- Drew (last name not provided) inquired about the potential to relocate the crossover tracks.

C5. Update on Caltrain Business Plan and Electrification project (attachment)

Staff Obeso provided the presentation (Attachment) and shared Caltrain staff would attend a future Rail Subcommittee meeting in August or September to provide more information.

- Adrian Brandt spoke regarding the proposed Caltrain service frequencies at the Menlo Park station.

C6. Update on California High Speed Rail, San Jose to San Francisco project segment (attachment)

Staff Obeso provided the presentation (Attachment).

- Adrian Brandt spoke regarding the proposed HSR-staff recommended alternative, which recommends location of the Brisbane maintenance yard, no peninsula passing tracks.
- Dana Hendrickson expressed thanks to the Rail Subcommittee for a productive meeting.

**D. Adjournment**

City Councilmember Combs adjourned the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Angela Obeso, Associate Engineer

These minutes were approved at the City Council Rail Subcommittee meeting of September 30, 2019.