



**Town of Atherton
ATHERTON RAIL COMMITTEE
MINUTES
TUESDAY, March 7, 2023
Regular Meeting
6:00 p.m.**

Join Zoom Meeting: One tap mobile +16699006833,,93517000963# US (San Jose) Dial by your location +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose) Meeting ID: 935 1700 0963 Weblink: https://ci-atherton-ca.zoom.us/j/93517000963	Remote Public Comments: Meeting participants are encouraged to submit public comments in writing in advance of the meeting. The following email address will be monitored during the meeting and public comments received will be read into the record. Email: roviaia@ci.atherton.ca.us
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1. ROLL CALL

Committee Members: Alex Keh (Chair), John Maulbetsch (Vice Chair), Jack Ringham, Greg Conlon, Jim Janz, James Massey

Councilmember Liaison: Stacy Miles-Holland (Alternate)

Staff: Robert Ovadia

A moment of silence was held in memory of long time Rail Committee member and Past Chair – Paul Jones.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS – For items not on the agenda.

(This portion of the meeting is reserved for persons wishing to address the Committee on any matter not on the agenda that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Rail Committee. State law prohibits the Committee from acting on items not listed on the Agenda.)

Adrian Brandt advised that Menlo Park will be holding a community meeting regarding quiet zones at 6pm on March 23, 2023, at the Arrillaga Family Recreation Center.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 6, 2022

Recommendation: Approve minutes for December 6, 2022

Motion: Massey
Second: Conlon
Approved

4. PRESENTATIONS

City of Palo Alto Rail Crossing Alternative Analysis

Ripon Bhatia, City of Palo Alto

Millette Litzinger, AECOM

Peter DeStefano, AECOM

Staff from the City of Palo Alto and their consultant AECOM provided a presentation regarding their rail crossing alternatives analysis, focused on Meadow Drive and Charleston Road. The presentation included discussion of trench, hybrid and underpass options, including construction impacts and cost estimates for the various options (Trench= \$800M - \$950M, Hybrid= \$190M - \$230M, Underpass= \$340M - \$420M). The Committee had an opportunity to ask questions regarding the materials presented.

Adrian Brandt advised that lowered roadways associated with grade separated crossings are subject to flooding and need to include pumps with back-up power systems.

Presentation materials are attached.

Additional information is available on-line through the Connecting Palo Alto website: <https://connectingpalocalto.com/>

5. REGULAR AGENDA

a. Atherton Caltrain Station Remodel Update (5 min.)

The Committee will receive a brief report on the status of the proposed remodel of the Atherton Station Building. The Committee will have the opportunity to discuss current and upcoming issues and activities as well as related items. **Not an action item.**

Staff provided a status update for the project and advised that the project was released for construction bids, with bids due on March 15, 2023.

b. Watkins Avenue Safety Improvements (10 min.)

The Committee will receive a brief report on the status of the status of the design of the Watkins Avenue Safety Improvements project being implemented by The Committee will have the opportunity to discuss current and upcoming issues and activities as well as related items. **Not an action item.**

Staff reviewed the current status of the of the project and advised that Caltrain previously awarded the construction contract, and that work would be starting in

April 2023. Traffic control and maintenance of pedestrian traffic will be important during construction – there may be limited closures for specific operations. The project remains on track for completion as required by the MOU.

Adrian Brandt provided public comment indicating that bike and pedestrian access should be maintained during construction. He also provided comment regarding quad gates and that drive-around is not a significant issue along the corridor, but some vehicles inadvertently turn onto the right-of-way thinking that it is a road and that lighting at crossings is important for Caltrain to consider.

c. Caltrain Update (5 min.)

The Committee will receive a brief report on current issues associated with Caltrain including the Peninsula Corridor Electrification project, governance changes, and other related items. The Committee will have the opportunity to discuss current and upcoming issues and activities as well as related items. **Not an action item.**

Reference Documents:

1. Palo Alto Post Article February 13, 2023: *Caltrain's ridership recovers slowly*

Limited work related to the PCEP project has been occurring in Atherton, most related to power to the signal house behind the corp yard. Staff advised that Caltrain has initiated a corridor wide study to review and develop options and strategies regarding grade separation along the corridor as a whole. Target to complete the study and recommendations is the end of the year.

Adrian Brandt provided comment regarding the difficulty in predicting ridership, particularly after the pandemic – ridership recovery is very slow, and a pending fiscal cliff for transit agencies.

d. High-Speed Rail Authority Update (5 min.)

The Committee will receive a brief report on current status of High-Speed Rail. The Committee will have the opportunity to discuss current and upcoming activities as well as related items. **Not an action item.**

Reference Documents:

1. Mercury News Opinion article February 16, 2023: *Why high-speed rail remains essential to California's future*
2. Lake County Bee Editorial Article February 23, 2023 (also posted in Mercury News): *California should cut its losses on high-speed rail*

Staff did not have an update other than the news articles shared. Committee members expressed opinions regarding current status of the high-speed rail project.

e. Rail Activities - Neighboring Jurisdictions Discussion (10 min.)

The Committee will have an opportunity to various activities associated with the rail corridor in neighboring jurisdictions as they relate to the peninsula rail corridor,

as well as related items. **Not an action item.**

Reference Documents:

1. Menlo Park Council Study Session Staff Report February 28, 2023: *Provide direction on whether to pursue fully grade separated alternatives for Caltrain grade separation project*

This item was moved up in the agenda to follow the presentation. The Chair provided an update on activities in Menlo Park, including a meeting on February 28, 2023, Council considered a fully elevated track option rather than the previously preferred hybrid option. Their Council retained the hybrid option as the preferred alternative. The Committee had an opportunity to discuss various rail related activities in neighboring jurisdictions.

Adrian Brandt provided public comment regarding Menlo Park's process and would like Menlo Park to reconsider fully raising the tracks through the downtown area.

6. COMMITTEE AND STAFF MEMBER COMMENTS

None.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

9. NEXT REGULAR MEETING – June 6, 2023

10. ADJOURN

Motion: Massey

Second: Janz

Adjourned at 7:20 pm

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