

Date: _____ December 5, 2007

Committee Meeting Date: _____ December 13, 2007

Board Meeting Date: _____ January 3, 2008

BOARD MEMORANDUM

ACTION ITEM

TO: Policy Advisory Committee
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
Board of Directors

THROUGH: Michael T. Burns
General Manager

FROM: Mark S. Robinson
Acting Chief Engineering & Construction Officer

SUBJECT: Caltrain Service Upgrades – Safety Improvements

RECOMMENDATION:

Review and recommend that the Board of Directors approve the list of projects for the Caltrain Service Upgrades - Safety Improvements Project.

BACKGROUND:

The Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (JPB) initiated a Caltrain Safety Program for the railway corridor in San Mateo County. The program focuses on pedestrian and vehicle safety improvements along the Caltrain corridor, particularly at stations, pedestrian intensive areas, at-grade vehicle crossings, and other locations where safety can be improved. JPB contracted the consultant firm HNTB to carry out the analysis and prepare recommendations for a comprehensive safety upgrade program. As a result, Caltrain has programmed an at-grade crossing improvement project in San Mateo County, as well as a fencing program which includes Santa Clara County. The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) and JPB recognize that as service levels increase, a concurrent safety improvement program is required in order to minimize the potential for incidents along the railroad right-of-way.

VTA, in a collaborative effort with the JPB, has initiated a similar safety program for the Caltrain commuter rail system in Santa Clara County. VTA contracted HNTB to carry out a safety study of the Caltrain corridor between Palo Alto and Gilroy, including the UPRR - owned right-of-way. HNTB collected safety and operations statistics, performed a grade crossing inventory, and interviewed Caltrain officials and used this information to develop recommendations for county - wide safety improvement projects.

DISCUSSION:

The HNTB report (Attachment B) identifies necessary safety related projects in the county, including those previously identified and funded from sources other than the 2000 Measure A Transit Improvement Program. Some station and line segment projects have been previously

programmed in the Caltrain Capital Plan, including an extensive fencing plan in Santa Clara County. Grade crossing improvements form the majority of safety improvement projects that will be funded from the Measure A Program. All projects are listed in priority order based on previous programming, level of pedestrian traffic, level of adjacent Transportation Oriented Development (TOD), and grouping by phase with similar projects. A phased approach will be used to quickly bring all crossings to a relative level of consistency (Phase 1), and then, over a planned schedule, introduce a unique crossing upgrade program for specific pedestrian treatments (Phase 2). The first phase consists of installing signage and roadway striping, and constructing medians between opposing traffic lanes. The second phase includes various pedestrian improvements including guard rails, emergency swing gates, automatic pedestrian crossing gates, fencing, concrete crossing surface panels, and other various improvements.

VTA staff has reviewed the HNTB study and agrees with the recommendations of the proposed safety program. Based on this, the Board of Directors is asked to approve commencing design and construction of the designated Phase 1 and Phase 2 Caltrain Service Upgrades - Safety Improvements Projects shown on Attachment A. These projects will provide pedestrian and vehicle safety improvements along the Caltrain corridor, primarily at stations, pedestrian intensive areas, and at-grade vehicle crossings to improve safety and reduce the potential for pedestrian or vehicle accidents or injuries. In order to facilitate project delivery and control costs, the projects will be grouped for contracting purposes. The Board will be asked to approve individual contracts for the identified projects as they are ready. Staff will seek approval for the balance of the projects during appropriate fiscal years.

ALTERNATIVES:

There are no practical alternatives to addressing the safety related issues identified on the Caltrain right of way in Santa Clara County, as they are coincident with past and future service increases.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Sufficient funding for the projects listed on Attachment A is contained in the adopted Capital Budgets for FY 2007, FY 2008 and FY 2009.

Operating Budget Impact: There is no VTA operating impact associated with this work.

Prepared by: Gordon Head, Caltrain Project Manager

**Caltrain Service Upgrades -- Safety Improvements
FY 2008 and FY 2009**

Phase 1 Work – Signage, Striping & Medians	Estimated Cost	Projected Starting Date	Projected Completion Date
All Santa Clara County grade crossings	\$1,769,000	January 1, 2008	December 31, 2008
Phase 2 Work – Pedestrian Improvements	Estimated Cost	Projected Starting Date	Projected Completion Date
San Martin Avenue	\$1,133,000	November 30, 2007	April 10, 2008
Blossom Hill POC	\$10,000,000	January 1, 2008	December 31, 2009
Sunnyvale Avenue	\$517,000	January 1, 2008	December 31, 2008
Dunne Street	\$483,000	January 1, 2008	December 31, 2008
Tennant Avenue	\$533,000	January 1, 2008	December 31, 2008
6 th Street	\$497,000	January 1, 2008	December 31, 2008
Palm Avenue	\$568,000	July 1, 2008	June 30, 2009
Live Oak Avenue	\$568,000	July 1, 2008	June 30, 2009
Tilton Avenue	\$568,000	July 1, 2008	June 30, 2009
Church Avenue	\$568,000	July 1, 2008	June 30, 2009
Skyway Avenue	\$562,000	July 1, 2008	June 30, 2009
10 th Street	\$533,000	July 1, 2008	June 30, 2009
Main Street	\$483,000	July 1, 2008	June 30, 2009

Subtotal: Phase 2 \$17,013,000

TOTAL: Phases 1 and 2 \$18,782,000