



City Council Agenda Item Staff Report

CITY OF SAN BRUNO

DATE: November 26, 2019

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Jovan D. Grogan, City Manager

PREPARED BY: Jimmy Tan, Public Works Director

SUBJECT: Receive Update on Planning Study for the South Linden Avenue and Scott Street Caltrain Grade Separation Project and Provide Direction to Staff Regarding Potential of Scott Street Closure to Vehicular Traffic

BACKGROUND:

The City of San Bruno has been considering a grade separation at the Scott Street Caltrain crossing as far back as 2005 as part of the San Bruno Avenue grade separation project. The Scott Street grade separation was removed from the San Bruno Avenue project but in 2013 the City of San Bruno partnered with the City of San Francisco and applied to the San Mateo County Transportation Authority (TA) for funding for a Planning Study for a joint project to grade separate Scott Street in San Bruno and South Linden Avenue in South San Francisco. Currently, both the South Linden Avenue and Scott Street are the only remaining at-grade crossings in their respective cities and represent an important opportunity to both increase safety and spur redevelopment, as well as accommodate economic opportunity in the area. Since both the South Linden and Scott Street are evaluated together, it is critical that both crossings be completed as one package since one grade separation will impact the other due to their close proximity to one another. The railroad crossings at South Linden Avenue and Scott Street are relatively a short distance from each other, -approximately 1,850 feet apart.

A grade separation at Scott Street is essential to improve safety and decrease expected future traffic delays due to growth in vehicle traffic, greater frequency of CalTrain service, and the eventual addition of high-speed rail. In addition, the project would aid in the success of the transit-oriented development and related improvements within the transit corridors area, as identified in the San Bruno Transit Corridors Plan.

The funding was approved and on April 20, 2016 a Memorandum of Understanding to complete a Planning Study was signed by the two cities, the TA, and the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (JPB). All of the parties that signed the MOU enabling the preparation of the Planning Study have recognized the importance of exploring grade separations as a means of reducing the impacts of increased train service on traffic and safety at the South Linden Avenue and Scott Street railroad crossings. The Project Development Team (PDT) was formed in January 2018 and consists of representatives from both sponsor cities, Caltrain, and a team of consultants including AECOM, APEX Strategies, and CDM Smith.

ITEM 6.a.

The City of South San Francisco, City of San Bruno, CalTrain and the consultants have been collaboratively working together to complete the development of the Planning Study Report.

The PDT has been preparing technical evaluations and gathering community feedback for the various options for grade separating Scott Street and South Linden Avenue. A community meeting was held in August 2018 and was very lightly attended. Staff gave the City Council an update on the project in October 2018 after which the City Council directed staff to improve the public outreach process, to conduct evaluations of all options, including an option that staff had previously decided not to consider, and to prepare a traffic study.

The purpose of this staff report and presentation is to give the City Council an update on the work the PDT has done over the last year and to seek direction from the City Council regarding selection of one of the three project options for further study by the PDT.

DISCUSSION:

Over the last year, the PDT has worked to follow the City Council's direction which they received in October 2018. The PDT has completed a traffic study, reintroduced the option that had previously been eliminated from consideration which has the potential of property takes, and greatly increased its public outreach efforts, including going door-to-door in the area around the Scott Street crossing.

A second community meeting focusing on Scott Street with San Bruno residents was held on August 28, 2019 and was well attended. Three possible options that are available for the Scott Street railroad crossing were presented at the community meeting and are as follows:

- Option A – no grade separation at Scott Street,
- Option B – grade separation at Scott Street for pedestrians and bicycles but closed to motor vehicles, and
- Option C – grade separation at Scott Street for pedestrian, bicycles, and motor vehicles.

Option C would likely result in the need to take residential properties. At the community meeting, staff emphasized that no decision had yet been made on a preferred option and that the goals of the meeting were to present the options, provide the results of the traffic study, and solicit feedback from the community on the options. Since the meeting, the community has been much more engaged in the process as evidenced by a petition that was signed by 105 residents. The petition expressed residents' opposition to the option that would result in property takes, which is Option C. The key points made in petition were as follows:

- Oppose displacement of elderly residents,
- Consider Option C too radical and unnecessary,
- Believe Option C will destroy the neighborhood, and
- Believe Option C is cost prohibitive.

The presentation accompanying this staff report will provide the following:

- Project status and background,
- Summary of Caltrain's Business Plan and train traffic growth projections,
- Results of the traffic study,
- Discussion of the three options for the Scott Street railroad crossing,
- Report on the feedback the PDT received from the public, and
- **Staff's recommendation for Option B, which is to close the Scott Street crossing to vehicles and build a grade separated crossing for pedestrians and bicyclists.** Option B can be designed in such a way as to not require taking of residential properties.

Staff will request that the City Council provide direction regarding the recommendation to potentially close Scott Street to vehicular traffic.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with receiving this update.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. None.

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive update on Planning Study for the South Linden Avenue and Scott Street Caltrain Grade Separation Project and provide direction to staff regarding potential of Scott Street closure to vehicular traffic.

DISTRIBUTION:

1. None

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Summary of Scott Street Options
2. Conceptual Design of Option B

DATE PREPARED:

November 6, 2019

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Summary of Scott Street Options

Options		Pros	Cons
A	Scott St remains an at-grade crossing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintains connectivity for all modes ▪ No property impacts ▪ Lowest construction cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does not improve safety ▪ Intolerable delays for traffic (extensive gate down time) ▪ Limits opportunities for future improvements
B	Scott St closed to vehicles and grade separated for ped/bikes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides safe crossing for ped/bikes ▪ No residential property impacts ▪ Improves traffic flow around Scott St 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Traffic diversions due to street closure
C	Scott St grade separated (open to all modes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides safe crossing ▪ Maintains connectivity for all modes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant property impacts • Highest construction cost

ATTACHMENT 1

South Linden Avenue and Scott Street Grade Separation Planning Study



Option B: Scott St Closed to Vehicles with Bike/Ped Crossing

