



## **Item No. 5f. Town of Atherton**

### **RAIL COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT**

**TO: THE RAIL COMMITTEE**

**FROM: ROBERT OVADIA, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR**

**DATE: AUGUST 9, 2022**

**SUBJECT: RAIL COMMITTEE DESIGNATION**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Rail Committee review and consider options regarding its designation and provide feedback to the City Council.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Town's Rail Committee has been instrumental in reviewing and providing feedback to the City Council on rail related issues since its formation. These issues include but are not limited to rail corridor quiet zones, rail safety improvements, preservation of the Rail Station, service level recommendations, review of impacts related to Caltrain Electrification and the proposed implementation of High-Speed Rail through the Town. The Committee reviewed and provided feedback on the Electrification construction drawings, environmental documents associated with the Caltrain electrification project and High-Speed Rail. The Committee and its members were instrumental in implementing the Fair Oaks Quiet Zone, advocated for safety improvements at the Watkins Avenue crossing and against a 4-track section through Atherton.

The Committee provides support to staff in reviewing rail related documents and its recommendations to the City Council are appreciated.

With the approval of the Memorandum of Understanding with Caltrain in 2020, closure of the Atherton station, pending implementation of the Watkins Avenue crossing safety improvements, closure of litigation related to HSR, approval of the EIR/EIS for the HSR San Francisco to San Jose segment, and changes in Council's Rail Policy Issues, the Council is seeking feedback on the Committee's future direction and possible changes to its designation to best suit the role.

### **ANALYSIS**

The voluntary participation of Atherton's citizens in the operation of the Town government is critical to the City Council's and the Town staff's success in serving the community. The City Council has established several citizen advisory bodies composed mainly of volunteers. Volunteers to specific bodies are appointed by the City Council and charged with the

responsibilities of gathering, synthesizing, and analyzing the information relevant to their areas of responsibility and providing the City Council and Town staff with advice and recommendations. The Council and staff rely on this advice for the development and execution of Town policies and in preserving the quality of life for its residents. These Commissions/Committees include:

Audit/Finance Committee  
Bike/Ped Committee  
Environmental Programs Committee  
Park & Recreation Committee  
Planning Commission  
Rail Committee  
Transportation Committee  
Tree Committee (independent)

There are differences in being designated a formal Town Committee vs. being an independent Committee. They are listed below:

#### Formal Committee

- Members are selected by the Council
- Governed by the Resolution Establishing and Governing Town Committees
- Committee reports to the City Council
- Subject to the Brown Act – public meeting regulations
  - Cannot have discussion on topics within the subject matter jurisdiction with a quorum of the Committee outside of a noticed meeting
- Agendas are prepared and posted in advance of the meetings – discussion items must be on the agenda
- Staff Liaison and Council Liaison regularly attend meetings
- Staff Liaison prepares agenda and minutes
- Meeting space provided by Town
- Meetings are recorded

#### Independent Committee

- Members are self-selected
- Self-governed
- Not subject to the Brown Act – public meeting regulations
- Formal agendas are not required
- Staff liaison would attend most meetings
- Councilmembers could be invited to attend meetings
- Members would be responsible for preparation of agendas and minutes if desired
- Meeting space provided by Town

Committee should discuss the various options and considerations and provide feedback regarding the desired designation for the Rail Committee.