



Item No. 18 Town of Atherton

CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT – REGULAR AGENDA

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
GEORGE RODERICKS, CITY MANAGER

FROM: MICHAEL KASHIWAGI
COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

DATE: DECEMBER 20, 2017

SUBJECT: CALTRAIN ELECTRIFICATION PROJECT - DISCUSS AND PROVIDE INPUT TO CALTRAIN REGARDING PREFERENCE OF OVERHEAD CONTACT SYSTEM (OCS) POLE DESIGN WHERE CENTER POLES CANNOT BE USED WITHIN THE TOWN OF ATHERTON

RECOMMENDATION

Discuss and provide input regarding the use of a Single Track Cantilever vs. Double Track Cantilever OCS Pole System for areas within Atherton where center poles cannot be used due to inadequate width between the northbound and southbound tracks and authorize the City Manager to send a formal written request to Caltrain.

BACKGROUND

At the November 15, 2017 City Council meeting during discussion of the Comprehensive Agreement between the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (JPB) and Town of Atherton relating to the Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project (PCEP), City Council learned that the current design (65% complete) for the OCS poles within the Town of Atherton would range from approximately 35 feet in height to 45'6" in height.

Where available width between northbound and southbound tracks allow, center poles will be utilized within the Town. Center poles will have a maximum height of 35 feet. Where center poles cannot be used (approximately 0.2 miles north of Fair Oaks to the northern Town border), outside poles need to be used. For outside poles, the current design utilizes a double track cantilever design which requires a pole height of 45'6".

The rationale for Caltrain utilizing a double track cantilever design vs. a single track cantilever was to minimize impacts to existing trees. The estimated pole height for a single track cantilever

ranges from 30 feet to 35 feet. Typical single track cantilevers are 32 feet in height but can reach 35 feet based upon design loads and soil conditions. Caltrain estimates 5 double track cantilever poles will be required within the Town of Atherton. Ten poles would be required if a single track cantilever design were used.

ANALYSIS

Due to concerns expressed by City Council regarding the required height of double track cantilever poles, Caltrain was asked to do an analysis of tree impacts for both the single track and double track cantilever poles. Staff met with Caltrain on December 4th and received the following information:

DRAFT: Pole Type/Tree Impact Comparison North of Fair Oaks Ave 11/27/17							
Pole Type	Number of Poles in addition to Commitment of 17 Center Poles	Pole Height	Tree Impact Comparison				Considerations
			Trees Pruned Less than 25%	Trees Pruned More than 25%	Trees Removed	Total Trees Impacted	
Single track cantilevers	10	30' to 35'	25	2	1	28	Lower poles on both sides of tracks Increased tree impacts to residential on east side of railroad tracks
Double track cantilevers	5	45'6"	14	2	0	16	Higher poles on west side of tracks Decreased tree impacts on east side of tracks
Notes: Where feasible, center poles will be used for both options (17 approximately) and center poles have a height of 30' - 35'. PCEP FEIR environmentally cleared pole heights from 30' - 50'.							

Based on the above, Caltrain estimates utilization of the single track cantilever pole impacts an additional 12 trees. One additional tree will have to be removed and 11 additional trees will require pruning less than 25%. The tree requiring removal is a Silver Dollar Eucalyptus located on private property. Visuals of both the single and double track cantilever poles are shown below.



Single Track Cantilevers



Double Track Cantilevers

OCS pole design was discussed by the Atherton Rail Committee at their December 5, 2017 meeting. The Rail Committee unanimously recommended the single track cantilever design. Although they recognized the additional tree impacts of the single track cantilever poles, they believed the required height of the double track cantilever poles created unacceptable visual and aesthetic impacts to the Town and adjacent residents.

As proposed, the 5 double-track cantilever poles would be placed on the west side of the tracks only. As noted, these poles are 45'6" in height. No poles would be placed on the east side of the tracks. If single-track cantilever poles were used, poles up to 35' would be placed on both sides of the tracks. There are fewer properties on the east side of the tracks and the homes are generally situated farther away from the rail line. There are more properties on the west side of the tracks and the homes are generally closer to the rail line.

As previously stated, the current Caltrain design for outside poles within the Town of Atherton utilizes double track cantilever poles. Caltrain has indicated that changing the design to single track cantilevers represents a design change for their design build contractor and would result in additional costs due to re-design and additional construction costs. Accordingly, Caltrain has the ultimate authority to authorize the change.

POLICY FOCUS

Double Track vs. Single Track Cantilever poles result in different community impacts regarding visual and esthetic concerns and minimizing impacts to existing trees. Selection of a preferred pole design by City Council will reflect Council priorities in terms of minimizing overall impact of OCS poles within the Town of Atherton.

FISCAL IMPACT

Caltrain has indicated that changing the pole type from double cantilever to single cantilever will represent a cost impact to the project.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with this agenda item being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting in print and electronically. Information about the project is also disseminated via the Town's electronic News Flash and Atherton Online. There are approximately 1,200 subscribers to the Town's electronic News Flash publications. Subscribers include residents as well as stakeholders – to include, but be not limited to, media outlets, school districts, Menlo Park Fire District, service providers (water, power, and sewer), and regional elected officials.