



# AGENDA REPORT

**TO:** Edward D. Reiskin  
City Administrator

**FROM:** Ryan Russo  
Director, Oakland  
Department Of  
Transportation

**SUBJECT:** Alameda County Transportation  
Commission Cooperative Agreement  
for High Street Railroad Crossing  
Improvements

**DATE:** December 9, 2021

City Administrator Approval

Date: Jan 20, 2022

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**Staff Recommend That The City Council Approve A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator To Negotiate And Enter Into A Cooperative Agreement With Alameda County Transportation Commission To Implement A Railroad Crossing Safety Improvement At Union Pacific Railroad Crossing On High Street Under The Federal Railway-Highway Crossings Section 130 Program.**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The proposed resolution would authorize the City Administrator to negotiate and enter into a cooperative agreement with Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC) to implement a railroad crossing safety improvement project at the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) crossing at High Street as shown in **Attachment A**. The cooperative agreement will facilitate the transfer of responsibility from the City of Oakland to ACTC to be the lead local agency on the railroad crossing safety improvements under Federal Railway-Highway Crossings (Section 130) Program at High Street. The Draft Cooperative Agreement is shown in **Attachment B**.

## **BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY**

The Federal Railway-Highway Crossings Program (Section 130) provides funds for the elimination of hazardous conditions at railway-highway crossings at grade. Section 130 program funds are eligible for projects at all public crossings including roadways, bike trails and pedestrian paths. The program is administered by the State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The program does not require formal application. It only requires coordination among local agencies, Caltrans, California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), and railroad companies. Program funds are based on at-grade safety records. Since the inception of the Section 130 program in 1987, the City of Oakland has implemented two projects funded by the program, at Embarcadero and at Fruitvale Avenue crossings. Currently, the Oakland Department of Transportation (OakDOT) is overseeing the implementation of three

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additional projects. One of the projects is at railroad crossings at 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue with design nearing completion. The other two projects are at 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 105<sup>th</sup> Avenue railroad crossings, which are currently in bidding phase with construction expected by the end of 2022.

The High Street railroad crossings is anticipated to be designed and constructed by ACTC, under its Rail Safety Enhancement Program (RSEP), and in coordination with CPUC and UPRR. The cooperative agreement will authorize ACTC to implement the High Street improvements on behalf of the City, using Section 130 Program funds.

### **ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES**

The items in the cooperative agreement will comply with the City's holistic community safety, including improving pedestrian and bicycle safety. The City Attorney will review and approve the terms in the agreement for legality. The alternative is for the City to back off from the cooperative agreement so staff could perform the work in the future, but this will delay the safety improvement project at the High Street railroad crossing.

The High Street railroad crossing consists of four vehicle travel lanes, two westbound and two eastbound. On a daily basis, there are 43 trains that cross High Street at a maximum speed of 60 miles per hour. The crossing has two flashing light warning assemblies with two automatic gate arms.

CPUC has jurisdiction over the safety of highway-rail crossings in California. The California Public Utilities Code requires CPUC to approve the construction or alteration of crossings, and grants the Commission exclusive power on the design, alteration, and closure of crossings in California. At the High Street crossing in Oakland (CPUC No. 001D-10.40 and DOT No. 749712Y), there have been 14 crashes since 1999. Three of the crashes resulted in fatalities. Seven of 14 have happened in the past five years. In addition, the crossing is close to the on-ramp freeway intersection at Interstate 880, with traffic queues posing operational concerns. Any improvements to the crossing must be coordinated with Caltrans.

On August 10, 2017, the CPUC's Rail Crossings and Engineering Branch (RCEB) evaluated the safety of the crossing. Based on its findings, RCEB recommended that the City implement various crossing safety enhancements. These include installing new sidewalks in all quadrants with American Disabilities Act (ADA) detectable warning devices or tactile strips in all four quadrants; Flashing Light Signal Assembly warning devices in the southeast and northwest quadrants; drainage improvements; and signal interconnection and preemption. Each of these recommended improvements will be included in the ACTC project.

ACTC has since offered to implement the High Street railroad crossing safety improvement project, in coordination with CPUC and UPRR, and under the Section 130 program. Staff recommend this approach, as it would facilitate earlier project implementation of a critical safety improvement. The proposed cooperative agreement, as recommended in the proposed resolution and referenced in **Attachment B**, will establish ACTC as the lead local agency on the railroad crossing safety improvements under Federal Railway-Highway Crossings (Section 130) Program at High Street. City staff will closely coordinate with ACTC in the implementation of the

project but would not need to delay other critical rail crossing improvement projects in order to complete the proposed work at High Street.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

While the High Street improvements will be funded by external sources, the City will incur as-needed signing, striping and traffic signal operation maintenance costs for the new infrastructure following construction. Additionally, City staff time will be required for design review of the ACTC project and construction inspection.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST**

The project will be performed under Section 130 Railway-Highway Program and does not require public outreach. However, ACTC will be required to notify stakeholders and adjacent property owners during construction, as a standard City construction requirement. ACTC will also coordinate with the City on any other outreach needs.

### **COORDINATION**

Significant coordination has occurred to date among ACTC, CPUC, UPRR, and Caltrans. Additionally, the Office of the City Attorney and Budget Bureau were consulted in preparation of this report.

### **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

**Economic:** Improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities encourage more people to walk between home, school, work, and recreation, therefore contributing to local economic activities and providing public health benefits.

**Environmental:** Walking and biking are energy efficient, zero emission form of transportation. Accessible pedestrian infrastructure and increased active transportation supports the City's goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and supports climate equity.

**Race & Equity:** The railroad crossing safety project will provide accessibility and safety benefits for all modes. However, as walking and biking are inexpensive and broadly accessible form of transportation, the pedestrians and bicyclists improvements will especially benefit youth, seniors, people who are low-income, and people who do not own personal vehicles. Further, the project location at High Street railroad crossings is located in high priority neighborhoods as identified through OakDOT's Geographic Equity Tool.

### **CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)**

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No CEQA clearance necessary. This agreement will improve upon previously adopted recommendations from the Pedestrian Plan (20187), RESOLUTION NO. 86809 C.M.S. A Notice of Determination / Notice of Exemption shall be filed for improvements executed under the Cooperative Agreement.

**ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

Adopt A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator To Negotiate And Enter Into A Cooperative Agreement With Alameda County Transportation Commission To Implement A Railroad Crossing Safety Improvement At Union Pacific Railroad Crossing On High Street Under The Federal Railway-Highway Crossings Section 130 Program.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Ade Oluwasogo, Supervising Transportation Engineer, at [Aoluwasogo@oaklandca.gov](mailto:Aoluwasogo@oaklandca.gov)

Respectfully submitted,

  
Ryan Russo (Jan 20, 2022 14:29 PST)

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*Attachments (2):*

*A: Vicinity Map*

*B: Draft Cooperative Agreement*

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