

**North Fair Oaks Bicycle and Pedestrian Railroad Crossing and Community Connections Study - Common List of Questions with Responses**

Themes	General Questions	Response
Need for a new bicycle and pedestrian crossing of the Caltrain railroad tracks	Given the existing constraints, if a new bicycle and pedestrian crossing of the Caltrain railroad tracks were to be built in North Fair Oaks, would it be used?	<p>The San Mateo County Unincorporated Active Transportation Plan identifies North Fair Oaks as an area that ranks among those having the greatest demand for bicycling and walking due to factors such as its high population density and mix of land uses.</p> <p>Survey results from the Study revealed there is a need for another bicycle and pedestrian railroad crossing, going over or under the tracks, to improve mobility. Most survey respondents also said they would use the crossing one or more times per week. However, survey respondents also shared that a new rail crossing would need to be well maintained, free of trash and vandalism and that they would need to feel safe using it. Concerns have been expressed with the potential bridge height (approximately 5 stories high) and long ramps (approximately 2-3 football fields long) for the two bridge options. Personal security and maintenance concerns were much greater for the tunnel option. Given the constraints and trade-offs that would need to be further addressed, a preferred rail crossing option is not being recommended at this time.</p>
Concerns regarding gentrification and displacement	Would the improvements proposed by the Study increase the potential for gentrification and displacement?	Proposed improvements are not anticipated to increase the potential for gentrification and displacement. Equity was a key priority for the Study and the development approach was to focus on reaching the most vulnerable stakeholders, seeking input on existing transportation needs, priorities and preferences. Respondents to Study surveys shared that the proposed improvements have the potential to enhance mobility and access, especially for those who may not have access to an automobile and use transit. The Study team made a decision to only consider rail crossing options that would not require the removal of homes. The proposed bicycle and pedestrian improvements on local streets are intended to improve mobility for existing residents.
	Would any of the rail crossing options require the removal of existing homes?	While the purchase of property and/or easements could be required for some private parcels, the decision was made early in the process to eliminate options that required removal of homes.
	What about the development of strategies for local job creation?	The Study is at the planning concept level. Strategies for local job creation as part of construction could be further explored during a future capital implementation stage.
Personal security/safety	How might a new rail crossing affect personal security and how could people feel safe at the crossings?	Provisions to address personal security would need to be developed using design measures that could include, but are not limited to: lighting, mirrors to see around corners, panic buttons at entrances and at various points along long ramps, and closed caption television cameras (CCTVs). Law enforcement patrol could also help. Where space is available, opportunities may exist to create plazas near the crossing entrances to activate the area so people could be seen and heard, to create a greater sense of personal security.
	Would the bridge crossings have barriers to prevent self-harm?	Yes, safety barriers would be provided and are a Caltrain requirement for the bridge options and the ramps that lead to them.
	How would concerns regarding the unhoused be addressed for the rail crossing options?	The County has been proactive with the provision of new housing and support services to help people experiencing homelessness in the County transition to interim and permanent supportive housing such as the Navigation Center (see Project Homekey info at: <a href="https://homeforallsmc.org/progress/department-of-housing/homekey/">https://homeforallsmc.org/progress/department-of-housing/homekey/</a> ). Measures to further address personal security and maintenance concerns would need to be further explored during subsequent design development.
Use of space next to the rail crossings	Has the County considered the addition of a playground for the proposed plaza spaces associated with the rail crossings?	The exact use and design of proposed plazas is not within the scope of this Study and would be subject to further exploration with the community, should a decision be made in the future to proceed with Option A, the Dumbarton Avenue Tunnel or Option B, the Dumbarton Avenue Bridge.
Rail Crossing construction impacts	How would the construction of proposed improvements impact surrounding residents?	Construction and noise impacts would be further evaluated when it would undergo environmental review, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), if the project were to proceed at some point in the future. The Study team anticipates that there would be temporary access and noise impacts during construction of the rail crossings.
	Would plans be made to provide new parking to address the loss of parking with the proposed rail crossing options?	This Study does not include evaluation of new parking to replace on-street parking spaces. Space is constrained and opportunities to provide replacement parking are limited. Further coordination between the County and residents would be needed to address the desire for replacement parking.

Cost for Study identified improvements	Do we have an idea of the costs for the proposed Study improvements?	High-level ballpark estimates were prepared for the rail crossing options and accompanying bicycle and pedestrian improvements on both sides of the tracks. For the three rail crossings options, estimates were approximately \$47 million for the tunnel and \$25-\$30 million for the two bridge options. Based on input received from Caltrain regarding construction and maintenance above the high voltage Electrification infrastructure, cost estimates for the bridges could be higher. The high-level cost estimates for the complete build-out of the proposed bicycle and pedestrian street improvements is \$13-\$14 million. The bicycle and pedestrian improvements on both sides of the tracks are not dependent on implementation of a rail crossing. The estimates are in 2023 dollars.
Timing for and lifespan of a new crossing	How long would construction take for the selected rail crossing option?	Given the constraints and trade-offs that need to be further addressed, a preferred rail crossing option is not being recommended at this time. Should conditions change in the future, the exact timing for construction would be determined during future planning phases of the project. If funding, the completion of final design, and required permits and approvals are obtained, the anticipated time frame for construction could be 1-2 years.
	What is the lifespan of the proposed rail crossing improvements?	Each of the rail crossing options would be expected to serve the public for many decades with regular maintenance. Caltrain staff have informed the County that there would be significant risks maintaining a bridge structure in close proximity to the high voltage Electrification infrastructure.
Bridge crossing height	Why does the height of a potential new bicycle and pedestrian bridge crossing need to be approximately 5 stories high?	The width of the Caltrain Corridor is constrained in the Study area, with four separate continuous tracks running through it. Caltrain's electrified overhead contact system contains high voltage wires that must be located within the Caltrain right of way. The high voltage wires cannot be located over homes or adjacent public streets and are stacked above each other resulting in a higher height. Further investigation, as part of a separate study, would be needed to determine if lowering some of the high voltage wires is feasible, which may then allow for a lower bridge crossing height.
	Why would the proposed bridge options need to be higher than existing bridge crossings such as Woodside Road?	Caltrain's Electrification standards apply to new bridge crossings. The height of existing bridge crossings are remaining the same.
Feasibility of a new crossing	Given the constraints and trade-offs, is it even possible build a new rail crossing?	From a technical perspective, a new crossing could be constructed. However, there are many challenges that would need to be further addressed and resolved before implementation could proceed.
	Why weren't we informed of the extent of the challenges and constraints with a potential rail crossing earlier in the Study process?	Without an understanding of the community's preferences for the potential design of the crossing, it would be difficult to know the specific technical challenges and constraints of any options. This was a high-level planning study to confirm needs and provide recommendations, and community input was a key part it. Throughout the Study, the community's preferences for concept designs were developed and shared with the County's technical partners so that they could further assess impacts to their facilities and share findings and recommendations.
Other crossing options	Has the County considered the use of elevators to cross the railroad tracks?	The County carefully evaluated the benefits and constraints of an elevator crossing with external input from the Study consultant and local transit agencies that operate outdoor elevators. Elevators as part of a rail crossing option were not recommended by the Study due to many factors, including: ongoing maintenance and operation costs, regular inspections, repair and rebuild costs, vandalism and breakdowns, long out-of-service periods that can be experienced waiting for repairs, and the ADA requirement that mitigation trips be provided when the elevators are out of service.
	Has the County considered running a shuttle to transport residents across the tracks?	The provision of a shuttle was not part of the scope of this grant funded Study. A greater range of different transportation options, however, does provide flexibility and more choices for all. A separate analysis would be required to assess the viability of a shuttle, in addition to identifying ongoing operational expenses.
	Could the railroad tracks be elevated to allow residents to cross the tracks at street level?	The scope of this Study was to assess the feasibility of a bicycle and pedestrian crossing of the railroad tracks and identify bicycle and pedestrian improvements on neighborhood streets on both sides. The Study scope did not explore a vehicular crossing. Connecting roads across the tracks would impact many residences that are accessed at-grade (such as along Dumbarton Avenue) in order to achieve sufficient distance to ramp the streets down or up to cross the tracks. Elevating the railroad tracks would require changes up and downstream of a crossing for a considerable distance, generating a separate set of impacts and would result in significantly greater costs.
	Why can't we just build another road crossing of the tracks instead of a separate facility for bicyclists and pedestrians?	