



May 4, 2015

Members, Menlo Park City Council  
701 Laurel Street  
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Dear Menlo Park City Council Members,

Thank you for your continued interest in working with Caltrain to promote safety along the rail corridor. We share your interest in creating a safe environment for riders, pedestrians, motorists, cyclists and community members.

Since the March 18, 2015, Menlo Park Rail Subcommittee meeting, Caltrain staff has met several times with City of Menlo Park staff to discuss and evaluate potential safety improvements at the Ravenswood crossing. The modifications evaluated came from suggestions from City Council Members, Menlo Park staff, members of the public, Caltrans and Caltrain as part of the recently completed hazard analysis assessment of all crossings along the rail corridor. Below is a summary of Caltrain's evaluation, which is consistent with the recommendations in the staff report (Agenda Item F-2) prepared for the May 5, 2015, City Council Meeting.

**1. Install full-time left and right-turn restrictions at Alma St/Ravenswood Ave and relocate the crosswalk at Alma St.**

Caltrain supports this near-term solution. It is a proven, effective solution used in other parts of the rail corridor and will reduce the queue of vehicles that backup onto the tracks. Relocating the pedestrian crosswalk also will help prevent the queue of vehicles backing up onto the tracks.

**2. Traffic signal preemption at El Camino Real/Ravenswood Avenue and/or traffic signal at Alma Street/Ravenswood Avenue**

Caltrain supports the staff recommendation to study these options further. A comprehensive traffic study involving the City of Menlo Park, Caltrans and Caltrain should be performed to evaluate the feasibility of these solutions before it is implemented.

### **3. Install enhanced buffer zone at the rail crossing**

Caltrain supports the staff recommendation of an enhanced buffer zone that includes modified street markings and signage alerting motorists of the rail crossing. Caltrain would work closely with the City of Menlo Park to install the marking/signage in appropriate locations by the crossing.

### **4. Install a “train approaching” sign and warning light**

Caltrain supports the staff recommendation to continue to monitor technology advances that could improve warning to motorists and pedestrians. Better accuracy from the Caltrain predictive arrival time system is needed before the “train approaching” sign could be an effective option. The current lights, bells and gates at the grade crossing serve the same intended purpose as the train approaching sign and meet or exceed all federal and state standards.

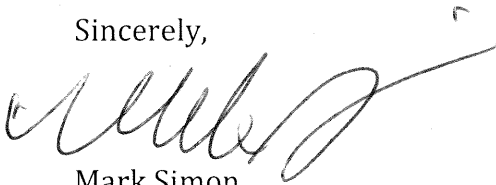
In addition to the options listed above, Caltrain supports efforts to provide additional **enforcement** at the grade crossing and **education** to the community about the hazards of grade crossings.

Caltrain’s transit police has a High-Intensity Strategic Enforcement Program that targets grade crossings where citizens engage in unsafe behavior. Caltrain’s Transit Police does targeted enforcement at the Ravenswood crossing on a regular basis and would be willing to coordinate additional enforcement efforts with the Menlo Park Police Department. The targeted enforcement efforts result in citations to deter motorists and pedestrians from illegally entering or stopping on the tracks and are a proven and effective solution used to change unsafe behaviors.

Finally, Caltrain is an active member of the California Operation Lifesaver Program and offers rail safety presentations for people of all age groups, especially students. These presentations teach individuals how to stay safe while around the rail system and gain a better understanding of the behaviors to avoid hazards. The presentations use engaging videos and other materials to actively involve audiences in rail safety. Caltrain staff is already working with Menlo Park City Council, staff and community groups to schedule additional safety presentations in the community.

Thank you again for working with us to provide a safe rail corridor in Menlo Park.

Sincerely,



Mark Simon  
Executive Officer, Caltrain Public Affairs