

City of Burlingame
Broadway Grade Separation
Community Impact Statement

The City of Burlingame appreciates the opportunity to submit once again an application for the modifications of the existing grade crossing at Broadway with the railroad tracks. This project is with the City of Burlingame, while Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (PCJPB) is the operator of the Caltrain commuter rail service along this corridor. This project is in partnership with not only the PCJPB/Caltrain, but the San Mateo County Transportation Authority (SMCTA) as well. Caltrain is the seventh largest commuter rail system in the country, offering service to three million people along the San Francisco Peninsula (the Peninsula), which stretches from San Francisco to San Jose and includes San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties.

The Broadway at-grade crossing was built in the early 1900s. Over time, it has become increasingly unsafe, congested, and inefficient due to population growth, increased traffic, and increased train volume. Over 32,000 vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists contend with the existing at-grade crossing on a daily basis.

The Broadway Grade Separation Project will eliminate the existing at-grade railroad crossing at Broadway, which bifurcates the city, and will create a grade-separated crossing at the intersection. Broadway is a critical east-west route between U.S. Highway 101 and State Route 82 (El Camino Real) and serves as a gateway to the city and the Broadway business district to the west of the railroad tracks.

The Project will elevate the railroad to provide the clearance necessary for Broadway traffic to flow under the railroad. Additionally, the Broadway train station is subject to the hold-out rule because the existing platform width does not meet the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) requirement to allow safe passage of trains while another train is boarding at the station. To address the existing hold-out rule conditions at the station platforms, the Broadway Station located adjacent to the at-grade crossing will be demolished to build the new alignment of railway tracks and associated appurtenances. The newly configured platforms will no longer require trains to be held off while another train is boarding/unboarding at the station.

The northern end of the new central platform will extend over Broadway on a bridge. Pedestrians will be able to access the station from either side of the tracks at entrances on Broadway, Cadillac Way, and Carmelita Avenue. Access to the platform will be provided via stairs at either end of the platform and by two ADA-accessible ramps. These new access points will substantially improve pedestrian/bicyclist safety and access by removing the need to cross the existing gated, at-grade active tracks.

Emergency services are significantly impacted by the at-grade crossing extend beyond direct hazards and impact first responders' ability to quickly access areas of the city. The City of Burlingame is divided by the railroad tracks, creating challenges for public safety personnel responding to emergencies. Burlingame's fire stations, police station, and the regional hospital are all located on the west side of the tracks. The Burlingame Police Department receives an average of over 44,000 calls for service annually, of which about half require the Police Department to cross the railroad tracks. The Central County Fire

Department (CCFD) responds to 7,500-8,000 calls for service annually, of which 10% require travel across the railroad tracks. When an emergency arises, first responders must find routes that avoid Broadway due to possible train crossings resulting in stand-still traffic. Crossing the railroad tracks to respond to emergency calls can add several minutes to police response times. The Fire Department reports that response times double during peak commute hours – from four minutes to eight minutes – when responding to calls on the east side of the tracks. Broadway is a designated evacuation route for both the City of Burlingame and the Town of Hillsborough, which lies immediately west of Burlingame. Should an emergency occur, delays and congestion could pose serious safety risks to residents. Burlingame’s industrial and manufacturing parks, airport hotels, and approximately 30 percent of the City’s residential population live on the east side of the tracks. Slower response times due to traffic on Broadway leave many residents, workers, and travelers at high risk.

CCFD explained that emergency vehicles often wait instead of taking detours due to liability reasons, resulting in longer delays in service. The Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA’s) methodology was used to estimate the expected value of lives and property lost due to the delayed response. The emergency service benefit was calculated based on an estimated eastside service population of 20,000 individuals (including residents, road users, hotels, offices, etc.). Currently, approximately 3% of all emergency calls to the eastside are affected by delays caused by trains at the grade crossing. The minimum detour to the nearest grade separated crossing is an average of four minutes. Overall, the Project is expected to save at least two lives per year from cardiac arrest alone due to faster response time through the crossing and is expected to halve emergency response time for future eastside service calls when the crossing is closed (in 2029, this is expected to be an over five-minute difference).

Final engineering design is now well underway, environmental clearance has been secured, the majority of the project funded, and the Project is ready for construction. The Section 190 Grade Separation Program will provide critical dollars to initiate construction at this dangerous at-grade railroad crossing.