

## 2011 Council Study Issue

## DPW 09-05 Caltrain Community Wall Benefit Assessment District Study

**Lead Department** Public Works

**History**            **1 year ago** Deferred      **2 years ago** Deferred

### 1. What are the key elements of the issue? What precipitated it?

A resident of the neighborhood north of the Sunnyvale Caltrain station is concerned about noise levels in the neighborhood. He believes that the quality of life is being compromised by train noise and noise from the Multimodal station. Recent studies show that noise levels exceed federal standards at a small number of locations within the neighborhood, but federal law does not require railroads to mitigate railroad noise. This study would evaluate logistics and gauge community support for creation of a benefit assessment district to fund construction of a community wall or other appropriate noise attenuation to address noise issues in the neighborhood.

High Speed Rail - added information

A High Speed Rail project, currently under consideration may result in placing new and existing rail lines within a trench in the downtown area. This could significantly reduce train noise more effectively than other measures.

### 2. How does this relate to the General Plan or existing City Policy?

Noise Sub Element 3.6B - Preserve and enhance the quality of neighborhoods by maintaining or reducing the levels of noise generated by transportation facilities (transportation noise).

### 3. Origin of issue

**City Staff** Public Works

### 4. Staff effort required to conduct study Major

### 5. Multiple Year Project? No Planned Completion Year 2011

### 6. Expected participation involved in the study issue process?

**Does Council need to approve a work plan?** Yes

**Does this issue require review by a Board/Commission?** No

**If so, which?**

**Is a Council Study Session anticipated?** No

### 7. Briefly explain cost of study, including consultant hours, impacted budget program, required budget modifications, etc. and amounts if known.

Costs are estimated at approximately \$50,000 to \$60,000 for consultants, plus from 180 to 280 hours of staff time. Design and construction costs cannot be determined without these studies but would likely be upwards of \$1.5 to \$5 million depending upon concept, permits,

right-of-way, and mitigation requirements. If an Assessment District were formed, further costs would all be charged against the Assessment District Bond, that would be paid for by property tax assessments.

**8. Briefly explain potential fiscal impact of implementing study results (consider capital and operating costs, as well as potential revenue).**

Study may result in a benefit assessment district that would generate revenue to construct sound attenuation improvements. Staff time and consultant costs done prior to the formation of the assessment district could not be recovered unless the assessment district is approved, including the preliminary costs, which could be subject to challenge.

**9. Staff Recommendation**

**Staff Recommendation** Against Study

**If 'For Study' or 'Against Study', explain**

Residents may sign a petition to form an assessment district for improvements that would benefit their properties at any time. There have been no such petition or indication that sufficient numbers would support this assessment district. Construction of a soundwall may also cause unwanted impacts that would be undesirable to the neighborhood or adjoining neighborhoods. The per-parcel assessment is likely to be sufficiently high as to not win a majority vote of the affected parcels. Therefore, preliminary costs would not be subject to reimbursement under an assessment district, and would not result in a community benefit.

If High Speed Rail is constructed within a trench the soundwall may mitigate noise without any costs to the City or residents. The soundwall assessment district process or construction of a wall would be greatly impacted by the High Speed Rail and could also impact the design and construction of a High Speed Rail.

Reviewed by

Mawri A. Rose 11/12/2010

Department Director

Date

Approved by

[Signature] 11/12/10

City Manager

Date