PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Council Meeting Date: May 20, 2008
Staff Report #: 08-070

Agenda Item #: D6

CONSENT: Authorization of the City Manager to Enter into an Agreement in the Amount of $40,968 with Alta Planning and Design to Develop a Caltrain Bicycle/Pedestrian Undercrossing Location and Plan Line

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council authorize the City Manager to enter into an agreement in the amount of $40,968 with Alta Planning and Design to develop a Caltrain bicycle/pedestrian undercrossing location and plan line.

BACKGROUND

During the Fiscal Year 2007-08 project priority-setting process, the City Council approved a project to develop a Caltrain bicycle/pedestrian undercrossing location and plan line for the City. A plan line is a General Plan designation that creates a reservation of property for future public use. When a property affected by a plan line is developed, the City may require the property owner to offer the portion of the land within the plan line for dedication to the City.

The goal of the project is to work with the community and develop a preferred location, for the undercrossing between Ravenswood Avenue and San Francisquito Creek. The plan line is expected to affect one of the properties located between the existing Caltrain right of way and El Camino Real. As part of the project, the consultant will conduct an inventory of the undercrossing study area, including site photography, traffic counts, assessment of traffic conditions, and bicycling/walking patterns. The project is identified in the Comprehensive Bicycle Development Plan.

The project will evaluate the physical dimensions of a future underpass so a plan line can be configured appropriately. Once the preferred location and plan line is developed and approved, funding for the implementation of the Caltrain bicycle/pedestrian undercrossing will be considered in future budgets. Additionally, the results of this project can be incorporated into the El Camino Real Vision Process and future planning efforts.

ANALYSIS

Summary of Selection Process

On March 13, 2008, City staff sent a request for proposals (RFP) to transportation and engineering consultants to seek transportation engineering assistance in developing a

Caltrain bicycle/pedestrian undercrossing location and plan line. This effort resulted in the City's receiving proposals from two consultants – Alta Planning and Design and Kimley Horn and Associates, Inc.

A selection committee, comprised of City staff and a representative from the Transportation Commission, reviewed the proposals. In evaluating the proposals, the committee used the following criteria: project manager experience, demonstrated ability to perform the specific tasks outlined in the RFP, methods or techniques to be employed, reasonableness of the schedule to complete each task, and the project team's experience with similar projects.

On the basis of the written proposals, the selection committee concluded that Alta Planning and Design was best able to meet the City's needs within the allocated budget for this project. Alta Planning and Design is familiar with issues in Menlo Park, having worked with the City on the Comprehensive Bicycle Development Plan. Additionally, Alta has extensive experience in working to resolve neighborhood concerns about increased noise, crime, and loss of privacy from a new facility.

Scope of Work

The following tasks are included in the scope of work to develop a Caltrain bicycle/pedestrian undercrossing location and plan line:

Task 1: Data collection and research
Task 2: Alternative locations and design concepts
Task 3: Identification of preferred location
Task 4: Final report

Each task is described in more detail in the scope of work, which is provided in Attachment A.

Project Implementation

Public outreach is an important part of the process in order to identify a preferred location that will suit the needs of the community. The first step in the study will be a public project workshop to describe the Caltrain bicycle/pedestrian undercrossing project and plan and gain input. Additional public outreach workshops will be held to obtain initial input on potential undercrossing locations prior to developing alternatives. One of the workshops will be communitywide, held at a central location with plenty of advance notice for the public to participate. Another will be neighborhood-based specifically to elicit input from neighbors of a potential crossing. There will be follow-up workshops to review and seek feedback on the proposed alternative locations and conceptual designs.

As an integral part of the project, additional meetings are planned in order to obtain guidance, including the following:

- A meeting with the Transportation and Bicycle Commissions to review information gathered at the public outreach workshops and obtain input from staff and Commissioners to narrow the alternatives to the preferred location.

- A presentation to the City Council to explain the final preferred location and plan line.

Staff estimates that the development of the Caltrain bicycle/pedestrian undercrossing location and plan line will take approximately ten months to complete. Staff anticipates that the consultant will take six to seven months to determine the preferred location, and the public hearing process to establish the plan line will take three months.

IMPACT ON CITY RESOURCES

The total budget for the project was approved at $55,000, including $40,968 for consultant services and $14,032 for staff time. The project does not include any construction. This project has been included in the FY 2007-08 Budget. The source of funding is the Traffic Impact Fees fund. The contract cost is as follows:

Contract	$39,985
Contingency	$ 983
Total	**$40,968**

POLICY ISSUES

This project is consistent with several policies in the 1994 General Plan Circulation and Transportation Element that seek to enhance the safety of pedestrians.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The development of the Caltrain bicycle/pedestrian undercrossing location and plan line is not a project under the current California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. Any requirements of CEQA would be evaluated as part of the potential future design phase of the undercrossing.

_____	_____
Randolph Craig	Charles Taylor
Assistant Transportation Engineer	Transportation Manager

PUBLIC NOTICE: Public Notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with this agenda item being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

ATTACHMENT: A. Scope of Work for the Caltrain Bicycle/Pedestrian Undercrossing Location and Plan Line Project.

2. SCOPE OF WORK

TASK 1 DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH

1.1 Kick-off Meeting

An organization and scoping meeting will be held with staff and others (as directed) to:

a. Review objectives of Project
b. Review scope of services
c. Confirm study area
d. Collect available data and published materials
e. Establish meeting and presentation schedule
f. Establish communication channels with other departments
g. Review and list State and Federal required elements
h. Review and list all applicable design and planning standards
i. Coordinate with City departments and other agencies

Changes to the Scope of Work will be made (if necessary) at the conclusion of this effort, and an amended Scope and Schedule will be published.

1.2 Survey of Materials

The Alta team will collect and review all relevant pedestrian and bicycle information from local agencies and jurisdictions. As developers of the Countywide Bicycle Plan and the City of Menlo Park Bicycle Transportation Plan, Alta collected and mapped all of the existing and proposed bicycle routes in the City, and also conducted field reviews and public workshops to better understand where people are riding and the current constrain in the city. The Caltrain tracks consistently were identified as a major barrier in the city, since they bisect the city. Alta staff also completed the Caltrain Rail Trail Feasibility Study, and is very familiar with issues related to rail service and maintenance operations and needs on the corridor.

Alta will create a survey with potential items to be used as criteria. The survey will be made available online to help determine the items to be included in the criteria and any other information. Alta also gather field data and review all existing relevant documents, plans, and studies related to Caltrain bicycle/pedestrian under crossing in Menlo Park. Among the documents to be reviewed, but not limited to, are the following:

Studies and Conceptual Plans:
Feasibility Study
Bicycle/Pedestrian Undercrossing Study
Comprehensive Bicycle Development Plan
Preliminary Construction Costs
Environmental Analysis
Memos and Staff Reports
Other Communities Information
General Plan

Base Maps, Digital Aerial Photos, Parcel Maps
Any other relevant documents

1.3 Needs Analysis

A needs analysis is a fundamental feasibility step for any project. The needs analysis will resolve these key elements of the project:

1. Projected Usage Volumes: needed to help size the facility, identify transportation benefits of the project, and also justify existing and additional funding. Alta will utilize its demand model to help project future usage and expected transportation benefits from the project.

2. User Group Profiles: needed to better understand the security and safety aspects of the study. For example, if a large number of younger school children are expected to use the project, the design and management issues of the project will change. Alta will utilize a variety of methods including surveys and review of local demographics and destinations to understand the expected mix of users.

3. Public and Agency Input: Early and meaningful involvement on the project by local agency staff, Caltrain and the public as part of the review process will be critical to the project's success and schedule.

4. User Survey: Alta will develop an on-line survey to be posted on the City's website that will allow for feedback from the public on their needs, concerns, and expectations.

1.3 Perform a Site Review

Alta will conduct a site inventory of the under crossing study area including site photography, traffic counts (as needed), assessment of traffic conditions and bicycling/walking patterns, surface utilities, mature vegetation, drainage, and other features and information. We will provide a site analysis diagram to be used in our discussion and decision-making through the preliminary design phase.

1.4 Public Outreach (Phase 1)

Alta will prepare and conduct two (2) public outreach workshops to get initial input on potential under crossing locations, prior to developing alternatives. One of the workshops will be a community-wide workshop, while the other will be neighborhood-based specifically to elicit input from neighbors of a potential crossing. Alta staff has managed well over 500 public workshops on bikeway and pedestrian projects, including numerous workshops in Menlo Park and San Mateo County. Our workshops are specifically designed to maximize public input and ensure a productive experience.

We will contact individual neighbors initially who may be directly impacted by a project alternative as a matter of protocol. We will also contact local neighborhood groups, the City of Menlo Park Bicycle Commission, the SVBC/Mid-Peninsula Bicycle Coalition, homeowners associations, business owners, and other intra and inter-departmental groups.

In addition, we will provide materials to be posted on the City's website that allows members of the public to review documents and provide input, including an on-line survey. We will advertise the workshops using flyers, a press release, and other means.

Public Workshop One – Project introduction and Initial Community Input
For the workshops, we will prepare a PowerPoint that presents a (a) summary of the project and agenda, (b) need for the project, (c) review of previous efforts on this project, (d) review of study area conditions and issues, (e) a review of similar under crossings in the Bay Area, and (f) reviews the concept alternatives developed for this project.

We will present a variety of **architectural and structural treatments** of under crossings throughout the state, showing the variety of looks and styles, along with comments on the cost, applicability to this project, and the likelihood of Caltrain approval.

Key elements of any under crossing project are the issues are the **issues of security**, crime, vandalism, and also the accessibility/function for bicyclists and pedestrians. Alta has the most extensive library on under crossings in the United States, and has conducted extensive research on what makes an under crossing safe, secure, and function. We will walk through each of those items with the public, including visibility, monitoring, lighting, and configuration of the under crossings. We will use visual simulation and Photoshop techniques to illustrate our presentation.

Alta has a very specific and effective method of conducting workshops for this type of project. We will prepare an agenda, sign-in sheet, questionnaire, and wall maps for use in the workshop. A typical agenda would include:

1. Introductions
2. Review of Project and Meeting Purpose
3. Project Background
4. Project Program and Goals
5. PowerPoint Presentation showing study area, potential concepts, similar facilities
6. Q&A
7. Break
8. Group exercises led by team staff
9. Summary of comments
10. Next steps

The objective of the workshop will be to have attendees understand why the project is being considered, the importance of a safe bicycle and pedestrian crossing, the issues imposed by site conditions, review how other cities have addressed similar problems, and getting the attendees actively involved in reviewing potential concepts and coming up with their own ideas.

Neighborhood Concerns
It is a prudent step to anticipate objections and address them early on in the process. Bikeway neighbors are often concerned about increased noise, crime, or fire or loss of privacy from a new facility can easily kill or postpone a project. We have extensive experience in overcoming this type of problem, and have a 100% success rate to date. Our approach is to make contact with neighbors early in the process, identify concerns, and then build confidence by showing neighbors other under crossings firsthand--even meeting with neighbors of existing bicycle/pedestrian crossings. We also provide visual models and simulations so they can understand the visual impacts of the facility. Our resource library of crossings around the country is helpful in showing comparable under crossing designs to skeptics.

	Task 1 Products ▪ Meeting agenda; presentation materials ▪ Revised scope and schedule ▪ Summary of data collection, existing conditions and workshop input ▪ Project on-line survey ▪ Photo inventory ▪ Public outreach Program (Phase 1)

TASK 2 ALTERNATIVE LOCATIONS AND DESIGN CONCEPTS

The purpose of this task is to develop alternative locations. Alta will work with the community to adopt alternate locations. As part of this task, the consultant will use the data from the first neighborhood and community meeting, survey and document review.

2.1 Identify Possible Locations

Our staff of engineers, landscape architects, and planners will review the corridor in the field to determine existing conditions that may lend themselves to an under crossing. For example, there may be sections of the railroad right-of-way that are slightly elevated—reducing the length of an under crossing. There may be existing utilities, drainage swales, and other features that either pose an opportunity or a major constraint. The configuration of roadways, land uses and buildings in the immediate vicinity also play an important function in the evaluation. The top four (4) potential locations will be identified through this process.

We will review available as-built drawings of the railroad corridor for items that may impact alternative alignments and designs. Specifically, we will be looking for property line markers, utilities, foundation data, and other information.

We propose setting up an initial meeting with Caltrain to (a) establish a project coordinator, (b) identify any planned Caltrain improvements in the area, and (c) identify needed approvals and permits. At a minimum, Caltrain will require an encroachment permit. Right-of-way needs will be assessed based on available mapping showing parcel boundaries and ownership.

Our fieldwork effort will be summarized and presented as a memorandum on existing conditions, which will include the site analysis diagram, site photography, field measurements, and descriptions of field observations and site conditions.

2.2 Existing Trails and Bike Routes

The relationship of existing and proposed bike routes, pedestrian patterns, and trails will be evaluated as they relate to each of the four (4) proposed options. The selected location should provide a reasonably direct connection to these existing/proposed facilities.

2.3 El Camino Real Properties

Alta will work with the City to review the status of properties along El Camino Real, and identify opportunities to obtain easements or purchase right-of-way based on a combination of property sales/permit requests, and also the configuration of buildings and parking areas. We

will conduct one (1) meeting with a property owner to discuss various options as part of this effort.

2.4 Develop Conceptual Drawings

Up to four location alternatives concepts will be prepared in AutoCAD or Illustrator using available aerial or other base mapping at a scale of 1 in = 20 ft/40 ft. The conceptual drawings will be shown in plan, profile, and sections (as needed) views showing all program elements, landscaping, ADA access pathway, under crossing location (with elevation and profile), pathway sections, signage location, and associated access improvements.

Access options to the proposed under crossing will also be considered. A new under crossing will require bicyclists and pedestrians using the opposite side of El Camino Real to cross over to one side to access a new under crossing. How this is accomplished will be critical to the project's success. The preferred option would be to have the access at a signalized intersection. A secondary option may consist of a widened sidewalk for the connection. We will review existing walking and bicycling patterns, available right-of-way, crossing options and other elements to ensure that the project is functional and integrated with the existing access routes.

Alternatives will be developed based on existing mapping and incorporating information developed in previous studies. No field surveying or geotechnical investigations will be performed as part of this project.

2.5 Project Footprint

Alta will develop a project footprint, including needed construction staging areas, considering the elevations of the under crossing and adjacent access points. In our experience, there are two types of railroad under crossing design projects. One consists of a relatively simple 'jacked' prefabricated encasement that has relatively little impact on rail operations. The second is more complicated, and requires construction of a temporary track(s) while a new under crossing is constructed. This second option will require a much larger project footprint that we will identify.

2.6 Advantages and Disadvantages

Alta uses an effective and transparent evaluation process to compare various crossing alternatives. Starting with the overall project goals, we develop specific evaluation criteria including:

1. Conformance with existing plans and standards
2. Environmental impact
3. Impact on adjacent land uses
4. Safety (conflicts between bicyclists, pedestrians, and cars)
5. Security
6. Right-of-way needs
7. Cost
8. Usage (appeal to different user groups and abilities)
9. Community input

We assign specific weights to each factor in a **Decision Matrix**. This allows us to test various weighting scenarios with the City to determine the appropriate balance, and then to present these findings to the public and stakeholders in a format that is clear. This process will yield a

preferred and back-up alternative.

2.7 Preliminary Cost Estimates

Alta will prepare preliminary cost estimates for each f the alternative locations for comparison purposes based on available information on topography, utilities, sub-surface and right-of-way conditions. We will use clearly stated unit cost assumptions based on recent undercrossing experience in the area.

2.8 Improvement Impacts

Alta will assess project impacts on a planning-level analysis, including potential impacts to roadway capacity and safety, local security, riparian or wetland impacts, and potential positive and negative impacts to surrounding land uses.

2.9 Public Outreach (Phase 2)

Alta will follow up on the Phase 1 public meetings by conducting two (2) public outreach workshops to review the proposed location alternatives and conceptual designs. As with the initial meetings, one of the workshops will be a community-wide workshop, while the other will be neighborhood-based. These meetings will be designed to get feedback on the alternative under crossing locations and concepts developed in this task.

Alta will also present location and conceptual alternatives to the City of Menlo Park Bicycle Commission and the City's Transportation Commission.

Alternatives will be shown on the Project Information Website allowing another option for the public to provide input. We will advertise the workshops using flyers, a press release, and other means.

Public Workshop Two – Location Alternatives and Concepts Presentation

We will prepare a PowerPoint that, in addition to a summary of information presented in the first workshop, presents a review of location alternatives and conceptual designs developed for this project.

We propose to use Visual Simulations using either PhotoShop and/or Graphical treatments to show what the preferred alternative would actually look like from various angles. We will address issues of privacy, light, noise, security and other issues based on experiences with under crossings in similar areas, including photos.

In addition to the first workshop objectives, the objective of this workshop will be to get the attendees actively involved in reviewing the preferred alternative and conceptual designs, and contributing their own ideas.

Summarize Comments for City Review

We will summarize all comments and questionnaires for use by the City to understand areas of major concern, possibly variations on concepts or new concepts altogether, and issues that might be addressed through operations and maintenance. We will provide ideas on how to respond to all comments.

	Task 2 Products ▪ Summary of field review results ▪ Up to four conceptual location alternatives ▪ Preliminary cost estimates ▪ Permit and Right-of-Way needs ▪ Development of evaluation criteria and discussion of alternatives ▪ Public outreach program (Phase 2)

TASK 3 DEVELOP PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE LOCATION

The purpose of this task is to find a location that will work with the wants and needs of the community. Alta will further refine conceptual drawings (colored rendering and/or photo simulation) and develop cost estimates for preferred alternative including plan line (future easement) location based on information from Tasks 1 and 2.

3.1 Develop Preferred Alternate Location

Based on the comments from Workshop Two, City staff feedback and using the evaluation criteria developed in Task 2, Alta will develop a preferred location and design concept to enough detail for Caltrain and public review and accurate cost estimating. This will include conceptual plans at an appropriate scale (typically 1" = 40' or 50'), selected details, a profile, and key sections showing the proposed design and easement limits. Assumptions on right-of-way boundaries, footings and sub-surface utilities will be expressly stated, using information from field reviews and existing documents.

3.2 Present Preferred Location and Conceptual Design

Alta will develop presentation materials for presentations of the preferred under crossing location to the Menlo Park Bicycle Commission, Transportation Commission and City Council, including the following elements:

1. Site Map (including existing bicycle, pedestrian, and transit routes)
2. Under crossing Plan
3. Under crossing Profile
4. Visual Simulations
5. Selected Sections

In anticipation of Caltrain review, we will address their concerns about staging, phasing, impacts to railroad traffic and safety, construction techniques, and other issues.

In anticipation of public concerns, we will address methods of mitigating potential safety, security, noise, privacy, and other aspects of the project in a **Management Plan**.

We will prepare a PowerPoint that presents (a) summary of the project and agenda, (b) need for the project, (c) review of key comments from Workshop One and Two, (d) project criteria and how the preferred location was selected, and (d) the preferred location.

We propose to use Visual Simulations using either PhotoShop and/or Graphical treatments to show what the preferred under crossing location would actually look like from various angles. We will address issues of privacy, light, noise, security and other issues based on experiences with under crossings in similar areas.

The objective of these presentations will be to have commissioners, council members and the public understand the preferred location and conceptual design, how it responds to project issues and public comment, how the project addresses concerns, the cost of the project, and the likely implementation schedule, and to get input for development of the final conceptual plan for the preferred under crossing location.

	Task 3 Products ▪ PowerPoint Presentation ▪ Meeting Materials ▪ Preferred undercrossing location and conceptual design

TASK 4 FINAL REPORT

The goal of this task is to develop a conceptual plan from the preferred location determined from Community input, and input from the Bicycle and Transportation Commission and City Council.

4.1 Revised Preferred Undercrossing Concept

The preferred under crossing location and conceptual design developed in Task 3 will be revised based on City input for incorporation into the final report and updated conceptual plans, as described in Task 3.2, will be prepared.

4.2 Final Concept Illustration

We will prepare a final Concept Illustration of the project to be included in the Final Report. This will include:

Typical Section – A typical cross section for the proposed under crossings will be prepared.

Plan and Profile Sheets – Plan and profile sheets will be prepared for the project. Drawings will define slopes to be in compliance with ADA requirements, retaining walls if required, and depict subsurface drainage and utility structures where they are known to exist.

Easement/Right-of-Way Limits – We will show the proposed construction and final required right-of-way needed for the project, based on available parcel maps, to be acquired through easement or in fee.

4.3 Funding

Alta will identify potential funding sources including local, county, regional, state, and Federal funding sources, and recommend which sources to pursue. We will assist the City in preparing competitive grant applications by reviewing and providing input.

Legal and Policy Framework

Alta will advise the City on the legal and policy framework of the project as it relates to the City's municipal codes and zoning ordinances. We will recommend strategies to assist the City in completing the project in conformance with City policies and laws.

Organizational/Procedural Steps

Alta will advise the City on organizational and procedural steps, including CEQA/NEPA compliance (depending on funding sources), Caltrain coordination, Caltrans review, ADA compliance, and specific grant requirements. We will also recommend specific organizational responsibilities for the facility's operation and maintenance.

Public Relation/Education

Alta proposes to create a simple brochure that can be distributed to the neighborhood, posted on-line, and otherwise distributed in the City that describes the project, addresses concerns, and its benefits to the community. The safety benefits of the facility, by reducing trespassing on the Caltrain tracks, will also be highlighted.

4.4 Final Report

Alta will create a Draft Report and Plans for review and input (5 copies), and a final Report and Plans (5 copies) in hard copies and digital copies (Word).

	Task 4 Products ▪ Preferred Under crossing Location Plans and Sections ▪ Cost Estimate ▪ Final Report