

# Town of Atherton

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91 Ashfield Road • Atherton, California 94027  
(650) 752-0500 • Fax (650) 688-6528  
[www.ci.atherton.ca.us](http://www.ci.atherton.ca.us)

January 21, 2015

Caltrain  
Attn: Stacy Cocke  
1250 San Carlos Avenue  
San Carlos, CA 94070

**Subject: Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project – Response to Comment on Draft Environmental Impact Report**

Dear Ms. Cocke:

The Town of Atherton reviewed the Response to Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project. The Town continues to have concerns related to noise, project timing, tree removal and pruning, locations of wires and poles and the Atherton station and gate mechanisms.

## **Quad Gates at Watkins**

*The Town requests Caltrain formally commit to being a fiscal partner to the installation of quad gates at the Watkins Avenue intersection. The Town believes that in the absence of a grade separation along the entirety of the Atherton corridor, quad gates represents the best safety mitigation measure for the continuing increase in rail traffic along the corridor.*

## **Electrification to High Speed Rail**

The Town strongly disagrees that the electrification project is separate from the High Speed Rail project and remains concerned with the legality of moving forward with the electrification project without fully evaluating the environmental impacts associated with the high speed rail project. The Town recognizes that certification of the EIR is a big step in Caltrain's electrification project but believes that it puts high speed rail one step closer to reality in Atherton. The impacts of high speed rail in Atherton will be significant and the Town will continue to oppose the project.

## **Wires and Trees**

The Town continues to have concerns with the aesthetic impact of the catenary wires and the OCS poles as a part of the electrification project. As discussed in Caltrain's Master Response 6 – Visual Aesthetics (Including Tree Removal), OCS center pole alignment would minimize tree

pruning and removal. The EIR identified Mitigation Measure BIO-5; to complete an evaluation of alignment and pole design options. *The Town requests Caltrain commit to implement the center pole alignment along the corridor within the Atherton town limits to reduce the significant impact of tree removal and tree pruning and relating aesthetic impact. The Town requests that Caltrain meet formally with staff to address these concerns moving forward.*

### **Alternative Analysis**

The Town continues to have concerns with the lack of analysis contained within the Alternatives section of the EIR. Modern diesel options were not studied adequately.

### **Minimum Service Level**

The EIR mentions restoring service to the Atherton train station with the implementation of electrification. We understand this service level to include one stop in the morning and one stop in the evening. The minimum service level offered by Caltrain is completely inadequate. The Town would like to continue conversations with Caltrain on how service to Atherton can be expanded in a meaningful way.

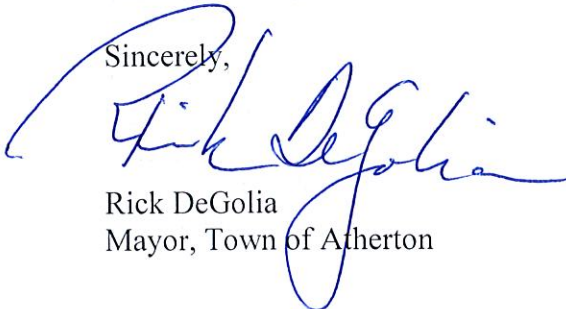
### **Atherton Station**

The Town requests Caltrain's careful consideration of the Atherton Station. In an effort to facilitate that careful consideration, the Town requests that Caltrain work closely with the Town during the Civic Center Project design to ensure that the anticipated needs of the Station are feasible in the design. If the anticipated needs are not achievable, the Town requests that Caltrain work closely with the Town to evaluate the pros and cons of reopening the Atherton Station before such action is taken.

In summary, the Town continues to have concerns with the electrification project and its impact on Atherton residents relating to construction, noise, tree removal and aesthetics. The City Council requests close coordination and continuous dialog between Caltrain staff and Town staff during project design and construction to address potential issues and reduce impacts to the maximum extent feasible.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick DeGolia". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "D".

Rick DeGolia  
Mayor, Town of Atherton



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January 26, 2015

Marian Lee  
Executive Officer Caltrain Modernization Program  
1250 San Carlos Avenue  
San Carlos, CA 94070

**Subject: Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project – Request to Extend the Time Period to File a CEQA Challenge on the Final Environmental Impact Report**

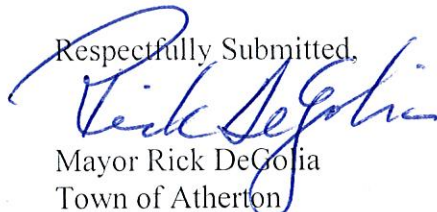
Dear Ms. Lee,

At the January 21, 2015 meeting of the Atherton City Council, we discussed the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project certified by the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board on January 8, 2015. The Town of Atherton still has significant concerns and would like the opportunity to explore solutions which avoids potential litigation. However, the current 30 day statute of limitations to file a CEQA challenge does not provide adequate time to engage meaningful and thoughtful negotiations.

Accordingly, the Town of Atherton respectfully requests a tolling agreement extending the statute of limitations for an additional 30 days. We believe this provides a more reasonable period of time to thoroughly review the tremendous volume of written comments and Caltrain responses contained in the FEIR. It also provides the Town additional time necessary to critically assess and determine the legitimacy and viability of potential legal claims we may have against the project FEIR. The additional time will provide great public benefit if it helps avoid unnecessary legal costs for both the Town of Atherton and Peninsula Corridor JPB resulting from a legal challenge to the Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project EIR.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Respectfully Submitted,



Mayor Rick DeGolia  
Town of Atherton

Cc: Menlo Park City Council  
Palo Alto City Council  
Atherton City Council