



COUNCIL REPORT

DATE: May 28, 2024

CATEGORY: Consent

DEPT.: Public Works

TITLE: **Downtown Utility Improvements,
Project 22-41—Various Actions**

RECOMMENDATION

1. Find that in accordance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements, Downtown Utility Improvements, Project 22-41, is categorically exempt as Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction, under CEQA Guidelines Section 15302.
2. Approve the removal and mitigation for one Heritage tree at a 2:1 tree replacement ratio with 24" box trees for Downtown Utility Improvements, Project 22-41.
3. Approve plans and specifications for Downtown Utility Improvements, Project 22-41, and authorize staff to advertise the project for bids.
4. Authorize the City Manager or designee to award the construction contract to the lowest responsive, responsible bidder if the bid is within the total project budget of \$12,360,000.

BACKGROUND

On [June 9, 2020](#), the City Council authorized the City Manager to execute a Cooperative Agreement with the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (Caltrain) and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) for final design of the Castro Street (Transit Center) Grade Separation Project. The Castro Street Grade Separation Project (Castro Project) includes elimination of vehicular access at the railroad crossing at Castro Street by rerouting vehicles through a new Evelyn Avenue ramp to Shoreline Boulevard, construction of a bicycle and pedestrian undercrossing of the railroad tracks and Central Expressway, and realignment of Evelyn Avenue at Castro Street.

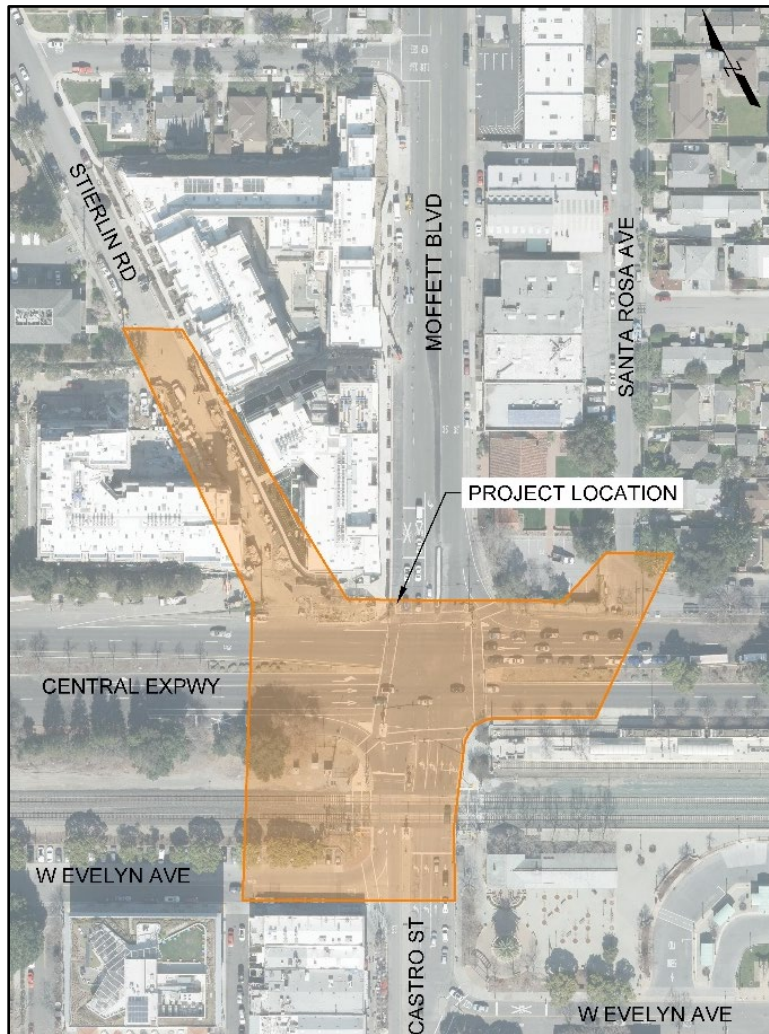
On [December 7, 2021](#), Council approved a professional services agreement with Mott MacDonald Group, Inc., to provide civil engineering services for Downtown Utility Improvements, Project 22-41 (Utility Project). The Utility Project scope consisted of relocating City utilities within the Castro Project's footprint in order to maintain water and sewer services in the surrounding areas when the Castro Project is under construction.

On [January 23, 2024](#), due to significant increases in estimated grade separation project costs, the City Council directed staff to:

- Reduce the scope of the Castro Project to the core bike/pedestrian undercrossing improvements by deferring the Moffett Boulevard street improvements, Evelyn Avenue realignment, and Evelyn Avenue ramp connection to Shoreline Boulevard and an at-grade bicycle/pedestrian path which will be completed as separate City projects in the future;
- Select Alternative B for the project delivery strategy, which prioritizes the Rengstorff Avenue Grade Separation Project and includes an interim plan for the Castro Street crossing of the train tracks and Central Expressway. It also includes continuing with final design and seeking grant and other funding opportunities for both grade separation projects; and
- Return to Council in fall 2024 with an update on cost estimates for both grade separation projects, results of grant applications, and any new information available, giving the Council an opportunity to reprioritize the grade separation projects.

Council also supported staff's recommendation to proceed with relocating the City's utilities out of the Central Expressway/Moffett Boulevard intersection to avoid continued construction cost escalation. Therefore, the Utility Project is also being divided into phases consistent with the Castro Project.

The Phase 1 Utility Project will relocate a water transmission main in conflict with the Castro Project within the Central Expressway/Moffett Boulevard intersection and Evelyn Avenue just west of Castro Street (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Castro Street Grade Separation Footprint—
Central Expressway/Moffett Boulevard**

The future Phase 2 Utility Project will relocate water, sewer, and storm drain mains on Evelyn Avenue west of Franklin Street for the Evelyn Avenue ramp and pedestrian/bicycle path (see Figure 2). Staff will return to Council at a future meeting once the Phase 2 Utility Project is identified as needing to move forward based on the timing and sequence of the Castro Project elements.



Figure 2: Castro Street Grade Separation Footprint—Evelyn Avenue Ramp

ANALYSIS

The City is proceeding with the Phase 1 Utility Project, relocating an existing water transmission main within the Central Expressway/Moffett Boulevard intersection (see Figure 3). The project will construct 1,900 linear feet of 18" water transmission main to meet the City's projected future growth and increase in water demand. The new transmission main alignment begins on the south side of Central Expressway, crossing the expressway, continuing north on Elmwood Street, east on Jackson Street, north on Moffett Boulevard, and east on Central Avenue to Santa Rosa Avenue. There is also a short segment of new water main on Moffett Boulevard, through the Adobe Building parcel, to Santa Rosa Avenue.

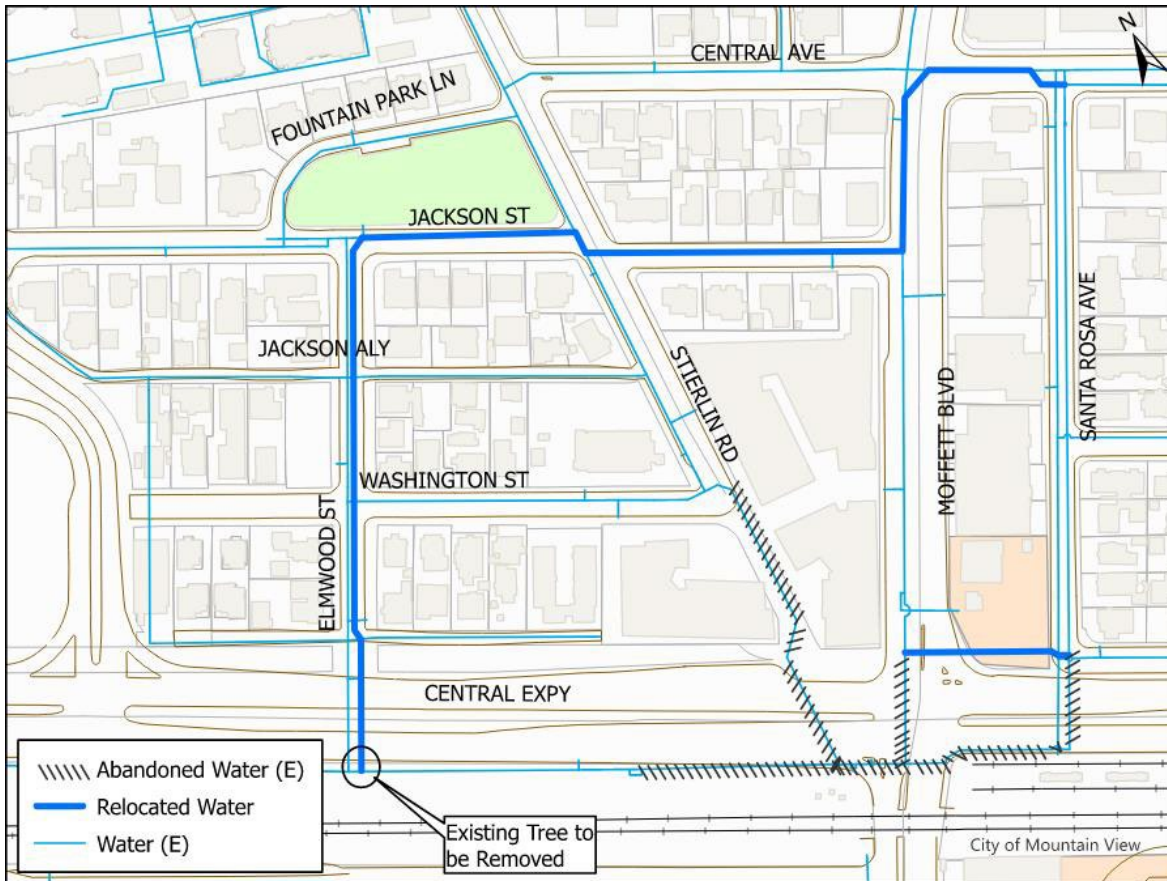


Figure 3: Phase 1 Utility Project—Water Transmission Main Relocation Alignment

The Phase 1 Utility Project will require removal of one Heritage tree on Central Expressway, directly south of Elmwood Street, adjacent to the Caltrain right-of-way (see Figure 3). On [February 14, 2024](#), the Urban Forestry Board recommended the City Council approve the staff recommendation to mitigate the removal of one Heritage tree at a 2:1 tree replacement ratio with two 24" box trees.

The plans and specifications for the project are complete. If Council approves the recommended actions and a responsive, responsible bid is received within the project budget, construction is anticipated to begin in summer 2024 and be completed by fall 2025. Advance public noticing and additional coordination with the downtown community will occur prior to and during construction.

Environmental Clearance

In accordance with the requirements of the CEQA Guidelines, the project has been determined to be categorically exempt as Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction, pursuant to Article 19, Section 15302(c), as it consists of the replacement of existing public facilities involving negligible

or no expansion of capacity at the same site. Staff recommends that Council make a finding that in accordance with the CEQA requirements, the project is categorically exempt as Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction, under the CEQA Guidelines (Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3 of the California Code of Regulations) Section 15302(c).

FISCAL IMPACT

The Phase 1 Utility Project is under Downtown Utility Improvements, Project 22-41, which is funded in the amount of \$12,360,000 from the sources shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Funding Sources, Project 22-41

Construction/Conveyance Tax	\$6,361,000
Water	2,725,000
Wastewater	2,052,000
Wastewater Development Impact Fee	673,000
Transportation Reserve	<u>549,000</u>
Total	\$12,360,000

The estimated project cost of the Phase 1 Utility Project is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Project Costs, Project 22-41

Construction	\$4,300,000
Consultant Services	879,000
Construction Contingency	500,000
Construction Inspection and Testing	500,000
Project Management	150,000
Permits, Printing, and Miscellaneous	<u>50,000</u>
Subtotal	<u>\$6,379,000</u>
City Administration	<u>415,000</u>
Total Estimated Project Cost	<u>\$6,794,000</u>

No additional appropriation is requested at this time.

CONCLUSION

Downtown Utility Improvements, Project 22-41, will relocate impacted City utilities within the Castro Project footprint. The Phase 1 Utility Project is consistent with Council’s directed revisions to the Castro Project and avoids continued construction-cost escalation. One Heritage tree requires removal for the Phase 1 Utility Project, and staff recommends tree mitigation at a 2:1 ratio with two 24” box trees. If Council approves the recommended actions and a responsive bid from a responsible contractor within the project budget is received, construction is anticipated to begin in summer 2024 and be completed by fall 2025.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Do not make environmental findings and do not approve the plans and specifications and defer the project.
2. Modify or do not approve the tree removal and mitigation plan for the project.
3. Provide other direction.

PUBLIC NOTICING

In addition to the standard agenda posting, staff sent notices to occupants and property owners within 750’ of the project locations.

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