

DATE: December 2, 2025

TO: Council Transportation Committee

FROM: Joy Houghton, Senior Civil Engineer
Robert Gonzales, Principal Civil Engineer
Edward Arango, Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer

VIA: Jennifer Ng, Public Works Director

SUBJECT: **Transit Center Grade Separation and Access Project (Castro and Evelyn Interim Improvements), Project 21-35**

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend City Council approval of the design concept for Transit Center Grade Separation and Access Project (Castro and Evelyn Interim Improvements), Project 21-35.

BACKGROUND

The Castro Grade Separation project is a high priority project for the City as the at-grade crossings of the Caltrain railway are a barrier to convenient pedestrian and bicycle travel and contribute to significant delays to adjacent streets. Grade-separating Castro Street from the railroad crossing has been a long-term City goal to improve traffic safety, pedestrian and bicycle safety and access, traffic flow, railroad operational safety, and traffic movement along all adjacent streets and intersections surrounding the crossings.

The grade separation project removes the interface between rail operations and pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle movements occurring currently and improves safety for all users. The City Council approved the concept of grade separation in 2017 as part of the Transit Center Masterplan. Since then, the Castro Grade Separation project has broken off as its own separate project.

The project design started in 2022 with Caltrain as lead agency, City of Mountain View as the project sponsor and Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) as the funding partner providing 2016 Measure B funding and lending technical oversight. In September 2023, at the 65% design milestone, the City received the updated project cost from the Construction Management/General Contractor (CMGC) for the Castro Project which was significantly higher than the construction cost provided at the 35% design stage. The construction cost estimate, in

particular the undercrossing structures and vertical circulation elements, was grossly underestimated by the Caltrain design team resulting in the project cost estimate doubling from \$136 million to \$271 million (in 2023 dollars).

The concept for the project is shown in Figure 1, below.

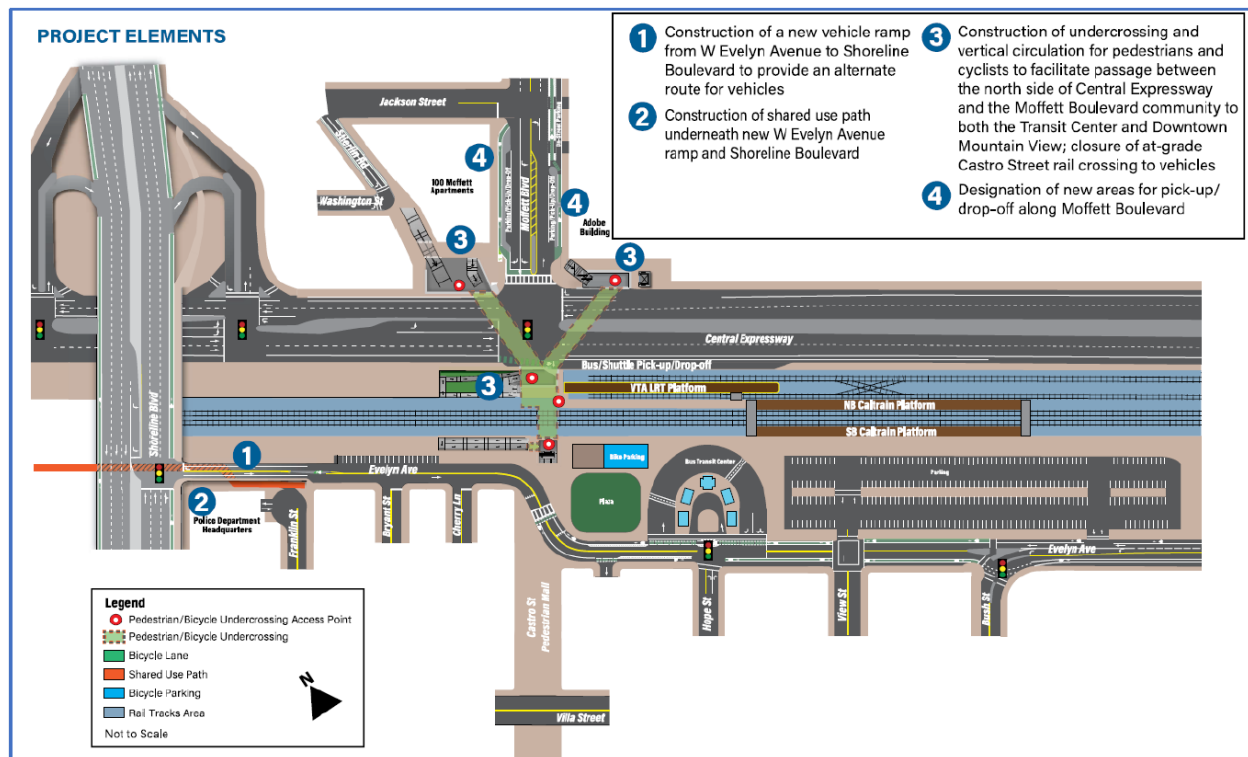


Figure 1: Castro Street Grade Separation Project Layout and Elements

The Rengstorff Grade Separation Project was progressing in parallel to Castro Grade Separation and experienced similar unexpected cost escalations. Therefore, on [January 23, 2024](#), in a Study Session, the City Council received an update on the status and cost estimates for both the Castro Street and Rengstorff Avenue grade separation projects. Council selected to prioritize the Rengstorff Project and to move forward with the Castro Interim Improvements Project that will eliminate the existing vehicle at-grade crossing while enhancing the existing pedestrian and bicycle at-grade crossings.

Staff has been working with Caltrain and VTA on review of the 35% submittal for the Castro Interim Improvements Project, received in June 2025.

Castro Pedestrian Mall

In June 2020, in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, the City implemented the Castro StrEATS program. This program was launched to facilitate outdoor dining within the Castro Street public right-of-way, allow for social distancing, and support the recovery of Mountain View's downtown businesses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The program has been revised several times since, with the current day being the permanent closure of the 100, 200, and 300 blocks of Castro Street as a pedestrian mall and outdoor dining location.

To properly implement the Castro StrEATS program and pedestrian mall, temporary signage and fencing was put up along Central Expressway and Moffett Boulevard to prohibit vehicle movements and queuing at the rail-crossing heading southbound on Castro to Evelyn Avenue.

Attachment 1 provides additional background on the Transit Center Grade Separation and Access Project and the Castro Pedestrian Mall.

DISCUSSION

Castro Street, including the Evelyn Avenue crossing at Castro Street, is a critical gateway to the downtown and for accessing the Mountain View Transit Center, which provides multi-modal access to the regional transportation network for the City's residents, and a key transfer point for employees in Mountain View and the greater Silicon Valley area. The existing crossing at Evelyn Avenue and Castro Street experiences heavy pedestrian and bicycle traffic, with more than 800 bicyclists and over 1,700 pedestrians crossing the railroad tracks each day.

The Castro and Evelyn Interim Improvements Project (Project) will eliminate the vehicle at-grade crossing of the Caltrain tracks at Castro Street. The Project will also provide bicycles and pedestrians a safer crossing of the rail corridor and Central Expressway through the enhanced at-grade rail crossing and will improve access to downtown and the Transit Center.

Project Scope

The Project will permanently close the rail crossing to vehicles while retaining an at-grade crossing for pedestrians and bicyclists. To accommodate the vehicle closure, new improvements will be installed in the following segments (see Figure 2):

- Segment 1 - Evelyn Avenue between Hope Street and Bryant Avenue;
- Segment 2 - Moffett Boulevard between Central Expressway and Jackson Street; and
- Segment 3 - Castro Street/Evelyn Avenue/rail crossing.



Figure 2: Project Limits

The detailed discussion of the elements of the Project are below and presented as follows:

- Discussion of each of the three segments providing concept design information;
- Pedestrian and bicycle circulation; and
- Vehicle circulation.

Segment 1 - Evelyn Avenue between Hope Street and Bryant Street

As the southbound Castro Street vehicular access is already restricted, the Project will eliminate the northbound vehicle at-grade crossing on Castro Street, and the existing west-bound traffic on Evelyn Avenue, from Hope Street to Castro Street, will be routed to Evelyn Avenue, west of Castro Street. This connection will provide a single-lane, westbound-only access for vehicles, and dual directional access for bicyclists between Hope Street and Wild Cherry Lane (Figures 3-5). The design speed for this single-lane road segment will be 15 mph.

Access to the 100 and 200 blocks of Downtown Mountain View will be conveniently accessible from Villa Street which is one block to the south of Evelyn Avenue.

Evelyn Avenue East of Castro Street (Segment 1)

Along Evelyn Avenue east of Castro Street (Hope Street to Castro Street), the project will install a Class 2 buffered bike lane on the north side of Evelyn Avenue (westbound) between Hope Street and Castro Street (see yellow in Figure 3). A Class 4 separated bikeway will be installed on the south side of Evelyn Avenue (eastbound) between Hope Street and Castro Street (see orange in Figure 3). The bike lane improvements in this section will result in elimination of two parking spaces along Evelyn Avenue.

In addition, the traffic signal at the Evelyn Avenue and Hope Street intersection will be modified to accommodate the elimination of the eastbound vehicular traffic between Castro Street and Hope Street (see blue traffic signal in Figure 3).

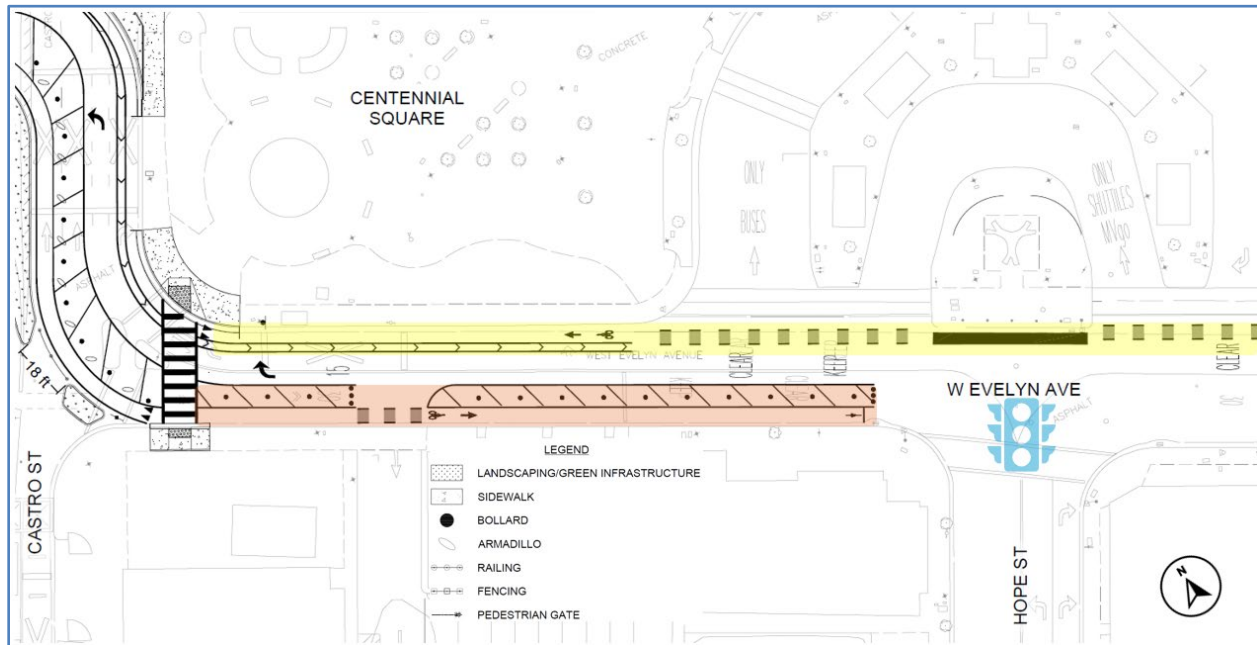


Figure 3: Evelyn Avenue Improvements East of Castro Street

Evelyn Avenue at Castro Street (Segment 1)

The improvements on Evelyn Avenue at Castro Street include installation of Class 2 buffered bike lane on the north side of Evelyn Avenue that transitions to a Class 3 bicycle route west of Castro Street for westbound bicyclists (see yellow in Figure 4) and Class 4 separated bikeway on the southside of Evelyn Avenue for eastbound bicyclists (see orange in Figure 4).

Landscaping will be installed on the north side of Evelyn Avenue and west side of Castro Street (see green in Figure 4). On the west side, landscaping will include trees in planter boxes. The landscape area on the north side of Evelyn will include green stormwater infrastructure. These landscaped areas will not only serve to enhance the area but also channelize pedestrian traffic to the marked crossings.

The two pedestrian crossings on both sides of Castro Street will be replaced in a similar location and will be upgraded with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant curb ramps, pedestrian crossing signage, high-visibility crosswalks and street lighting (see magenta in Figure 4).

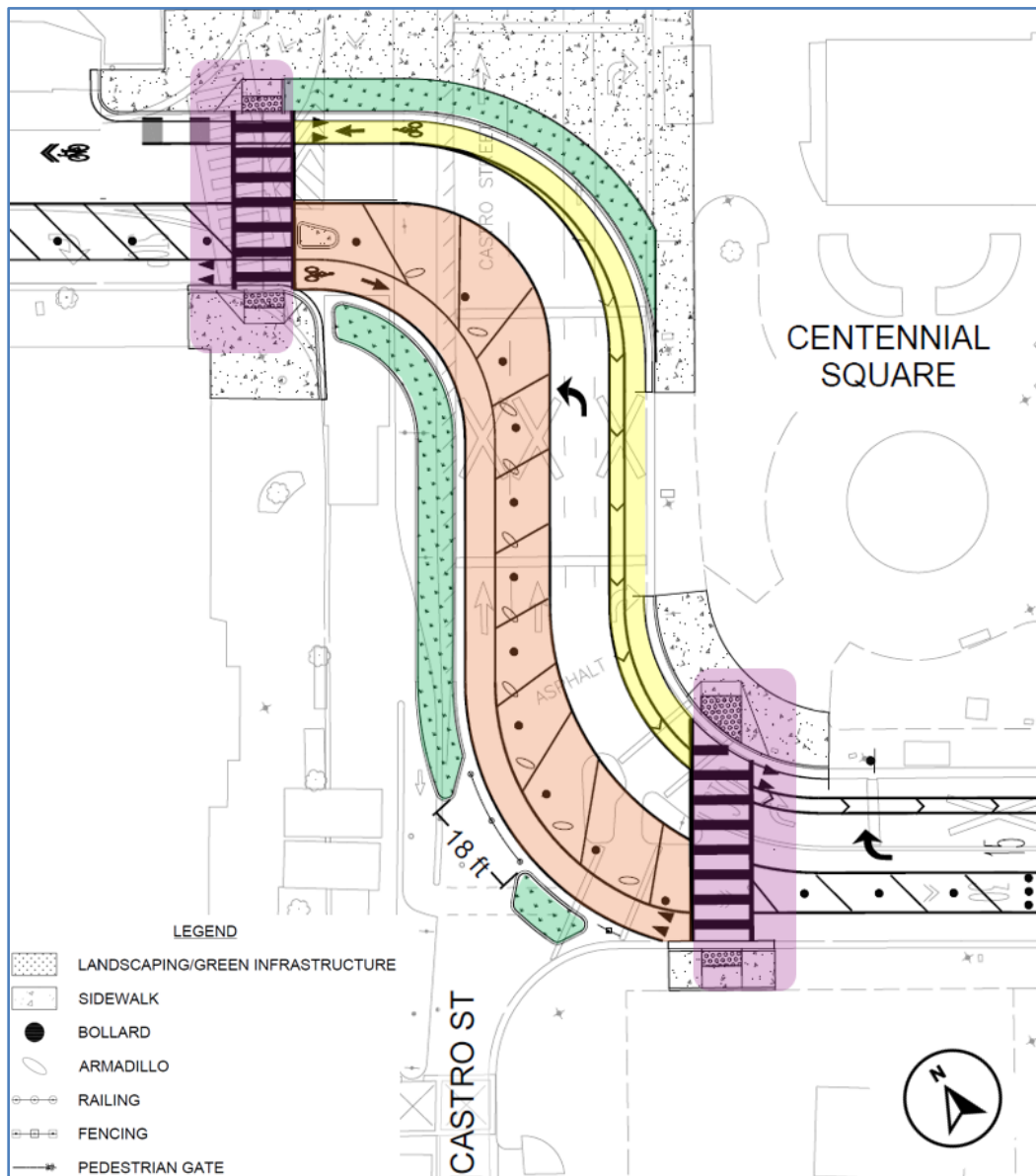


Figure 4: Evelyn Avenue Improvements at Castro Street

Evelyn Avenue West of Castro Street (Segment 1)

Along Evelyn Avenue west of Castro Street (Castro Street to Bryant Street), Class 3 bicycle route markings will be installed on the north side of Evelyn Avenue between Castro Street and Wild Cherry Lane for westbound bicyclists (see yellow in Figure 5). A Class 4 separate bikeway will be installed on the south side of Evelyn Avenue for eastbound bicyclists between Castro Street and Wild Cherry Lane (see orange in Figure 5). The bike lane improvements in this section will result in elimination of 10 parking spaces along Evelyn Avenue.

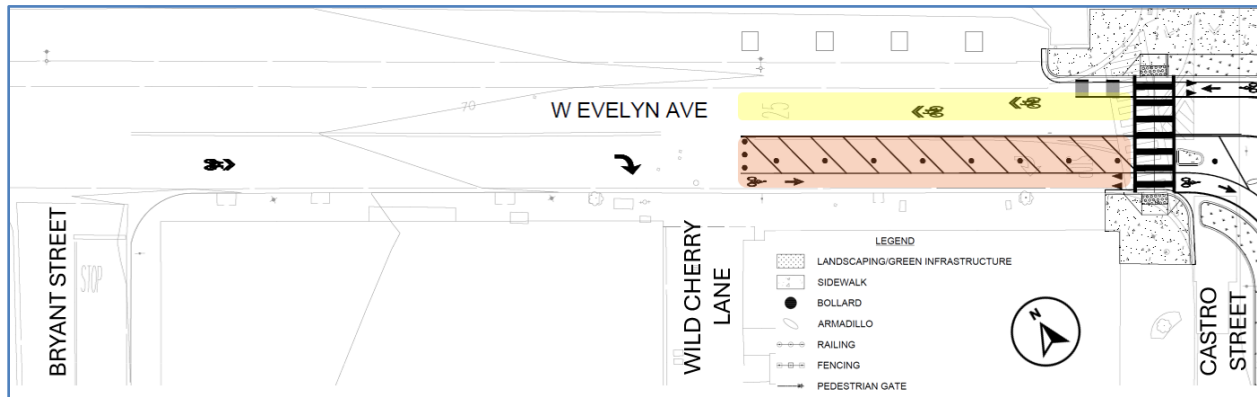


Figure 5: Evelyn Avenue Improvements West of Castro Street

Segment 2 - Moffett Boulevard between Central Expressway and Jackson Street

Moffett Boulevard Improvements at Central Expressway (Segment 2)

The Project will convert the intersection of Moffett Boulevard and Central Expressway to a T-intersection, eliminating the southern leg of the intersection, as vehicle access at the rail crossing will be eliminated. The Moffett Boulevard/Central Expressway intersection will require traffic signal modifications to allow the intersection to operate as a T-intersection (see blue traffic signal in Figure 6).

The intersection traffic signal modification will eliminate signal elements related to the rail preemption, which is a safety system that uses interconnected railroad equipment to control nearby traffic signals to clear vehicles from a railroad crossing and prevent them from being on the tracks when a train passes. The current signal preemption can create very long wait times for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross Central Expressway as they must wait for the train to clear and the signal to cycle back for crossing Central Expressway. Elimination of railroad preemption will reduce pedestrian crossing wait times at Central Expressway as vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians will no longer be impacted by gate downtimes as trains cross Castro Street.

The Project will also refresh the Central Expressway crosswalks and install new ADA-compliant curb ramps on the south side of Central Expressway (see magenta in Figure 6). Additionally, green bike lane striping and bicycle ramps will be installed for bicyclists crossing the intersection (see orange in Figure 6).

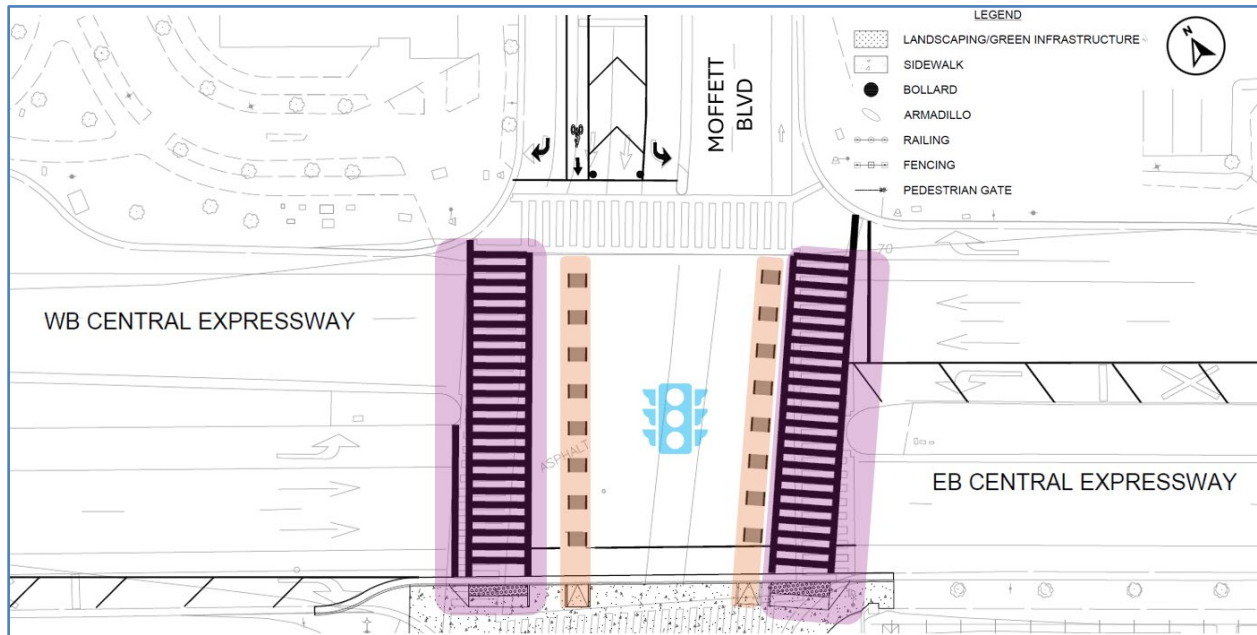


Figure 6: Moffett Boulevard Improvements at Central Expressway

Moffett Boulevard between Central Expressway and Jackson Street (Segment 2)

A portion of the existing Class 2 bike lane for southbound Moffett Boulevard will be converted to a Class 4 separated bikeway utilizing the existing southbound vehicle lanes which are currently closed due to the Castro StrEATS program (see yellow in Figure 7). No modifications are proposed to the northbound traffic and bicycle facilities on Moffett Boulevard north of Central Expressway.

Improvements on Moffett Boulevard north of Central Expressway will be modified in the future as the Moffett Boulevard Precise Plan is currently in development and will include recommended street cross sections for Moffett Boulevard north of Central Expressway.

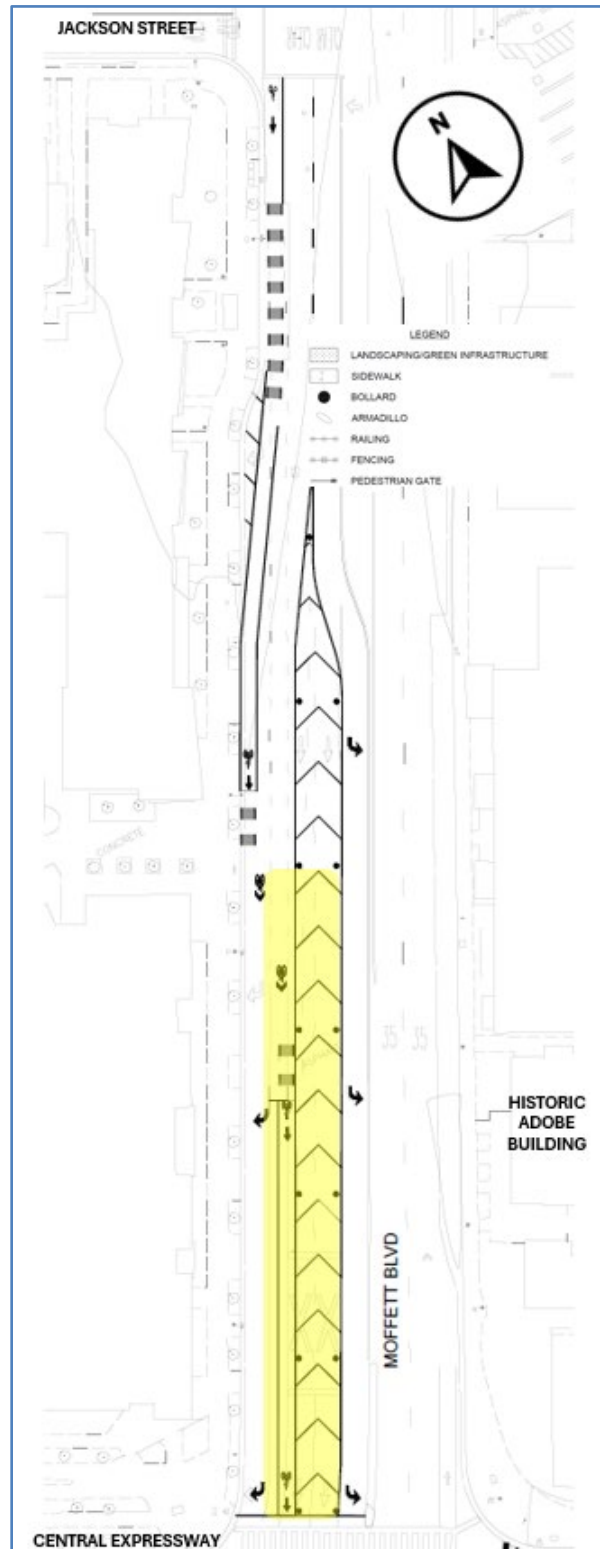


Figure 7: Moffett Boulevard Improvements Between Central Expressway and Jackson Street

Segment 3 - Rail Crossing at Castro Street/Evelyn Avenue

The Project will improve safety at the railroad crossing by eliminating the existing northbound vehicular access at Castro Street and combining the two existing at-grade pedestrian crossings into one wider bicycle/pedestrian crossing (see magenta in Figure 8). Caltrain's evaluation concluded that maintaining one at-grade bicycle/pedestrian rail crossing improves safety as it presents fewer conflict points.

The proposed improvements at this location are illustrated in Figure 8 and include:

- Removal of crossing gates and railroad signals on Castro Street (shown in red);
- Removal of roadway asphalt concrete and concrete track panels to increase the pervious surface area (shown in red);
- Widening of the existing easterly pedestrian at-grade crossing from 10 feet to 15 feet (shown in magenta);
- Installation of curb, gutter, and concrete surfacing on Castro Street at its connection to the Moffett Boulevard/Central Expressway intersection to restrict vehicle access, replacing temporary fencing currently in place (shown in blue);
- Installation of decorative fencing along the Caltrain tracks and right-of-way to enhance safety (see green lines); and
- Upgrades to street lighting to improve nighttime visibility (shown in yellow).

Staff is currently exploring the feasibility of adding landscaping at this location along Central Expressway to further enhance the pedestrian experience.

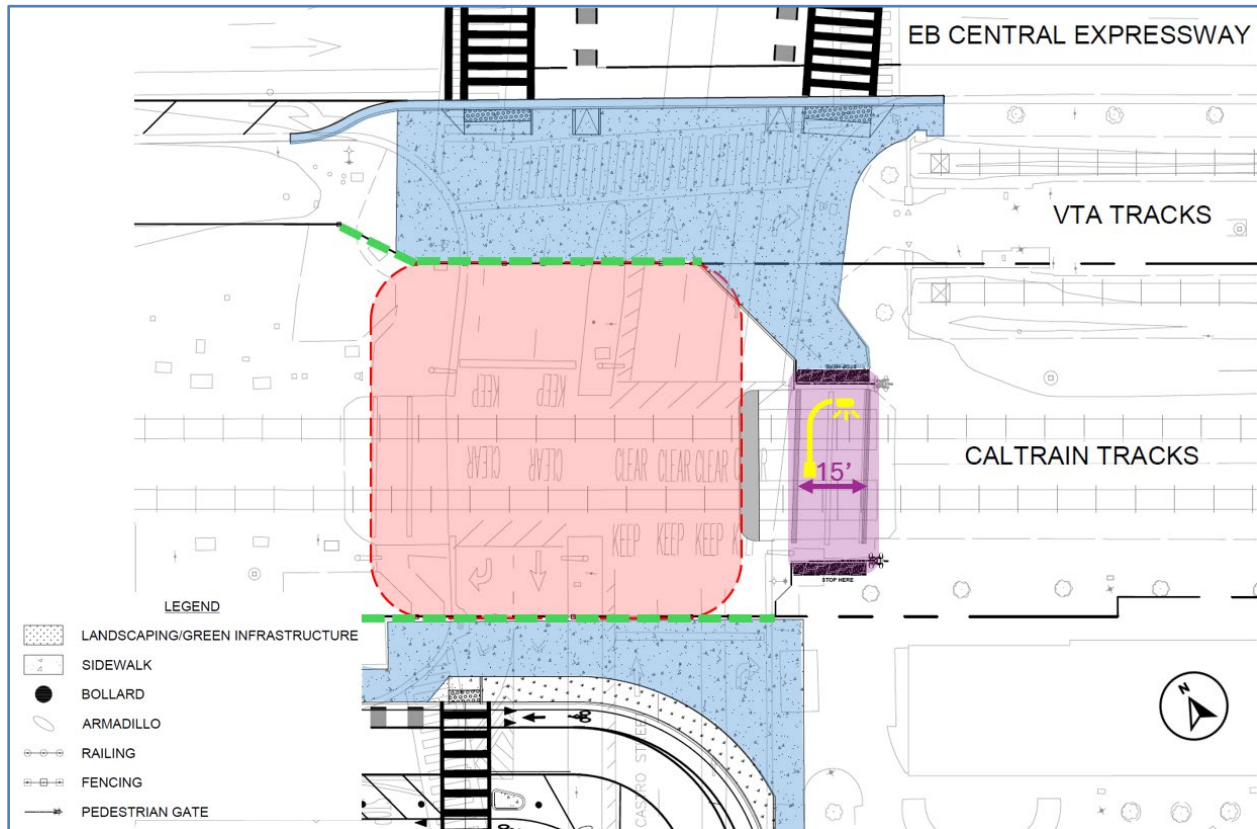


Figure 8: Rail Crossing Improvements at Castro Street/Evelyn Avenue

Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation

The improvements will enhance the pedestrian and bicycle experience by reducing wait times at Central Expressway and minimizing conflict points at the railroad crossing. As illustrated in Figure 9, these changes will result in a minor adjustment to pedestrian and bicycle circulation. Specifically, the elimination of the at-grade pedestrian rail crossing on the west side of the Castro Street/rail intersection will add a short distance to the travel path from the westside of Central Expressway intersection.

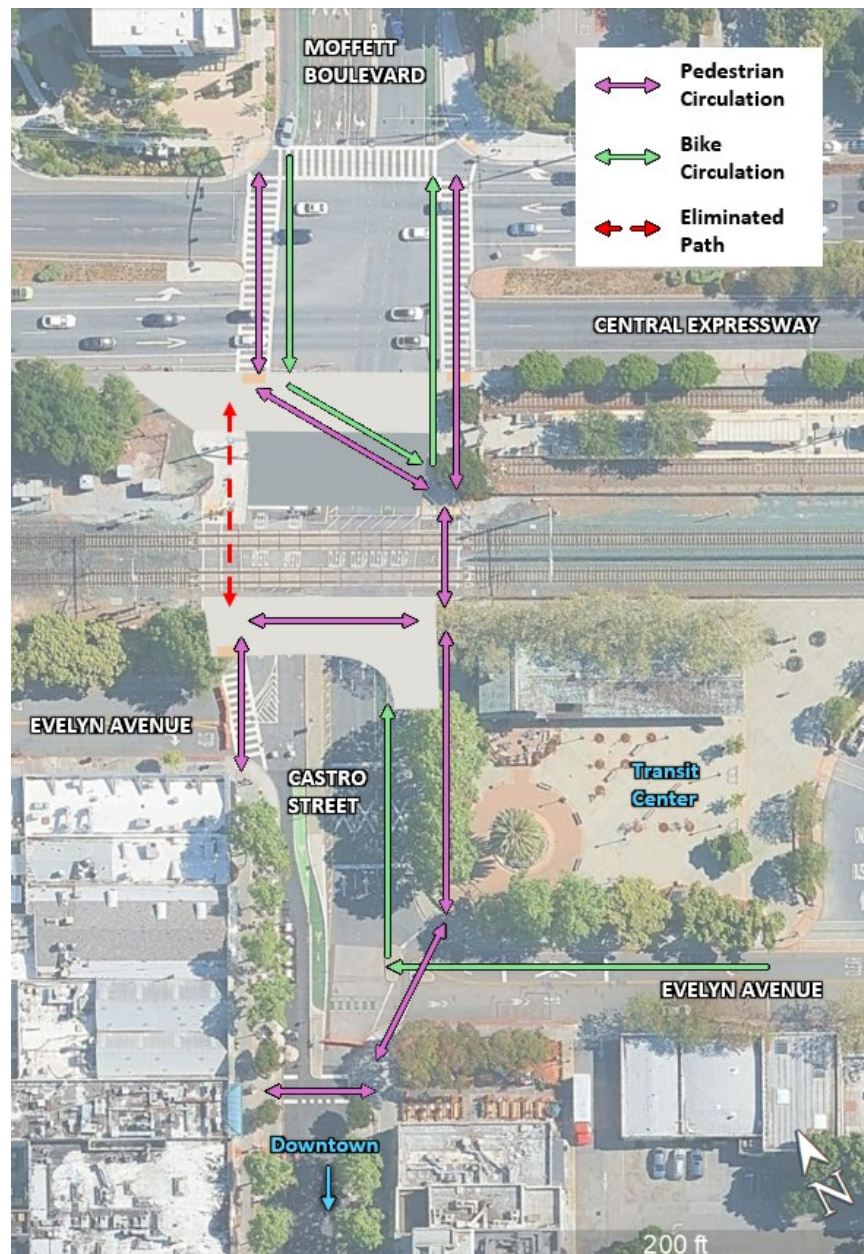


Figure 9: Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation Across Railroad Tracks

Vehicle Circulation

As a result of the previously noted changes, westbound vehicles on Evelyn heading northbound to access Moffett Boulevard, will be routed to Villa Street through either Bryant Street or Franklin Street. From Villa Street, vehicles will use Shoreline Boulevard to connect to Central Expressway to head northbound on Moffett Boulevard, as illustrated in yellow in Figure 10. Similarly, southbound vehicles originating from the north heading into the Transit Center or downtown will

have access via Shoreline Boulevard, Villa Street, and Hope Street, as illustrated in blue in Figure 10.



Figure 10: Vehicle Circulation

Project Cost Estimate and Funding

The Project is funded through final design utilizing the 2016 VTA Measure B funds included in the cooperative agreement for the Castro Street Grade Separation Project. The current project cost estimate based on the 35% design is \$6.6 million. The project has sufficient funds to construct the project when design is complete.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

On November 17, 2025, staff presented the design concept to the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC). The BPAC made a motion to request the CTC have staff convey community desire to keep both pedestrian crossings at the Caltrain Right-of-Way. In addition to the motion, the BPAC provided the following feedback for consideration:

- Anticipate high pedestrian and bicyclist counts to accommodate future multi-family housing within a half mile radius of transit;
- Convert the easterly crossing on Evelyn to a diagonal crossing;
- Remove parking between Wild Cherry Lane and Castro in favor of extending the class IV bike lane on the north side of Evelyn Avenue;
- Conduct a walk audit with design team and the public;
- Add improvements to the northbound Moffett Boulevard bike lane north of Central Expressway;
- Add a bicycle ramp near the easterly crossing on Evelyn Avenue;
- Add signals at the two Evelyn Avenue crossings; and
- Add bollards on the southside of Central Expressway.

Staff will evaluate the additional elements above and will incorporate those elements that do not have substantial impact to the project budget and schedule as the design develops further.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will evaluate BPAC and CTC feedback and will forward a recommendation to City Council to approve the design concept. Final design of the project by the Caltrain design team is expected to be completed in Fall 2026. Caltrain will issue and manage the construction contract and pre-construction activities are anticipated to begin early 2027.

PUBLIC NOTICING

In addition to the City's standard agenda and posting requirement notices were mailed to residents and property owners within 750 feet of the project area and distributed to persons who have signed up for project updates, representatives of VTA, and Caltrain.

cc: PWD, APWD—Arango, APWD—Boyer, CTE, PCE—Gonzales, SCE—Houghton