



JPB Board of Directors  
Meeting of August 5, 2021

Correspondence as of July 16, 2021

# Subject

- 1 University Ave Beige Pole Color
- 2 SSF Catalytic Converter Etching

**From:** [Tietjen, Brent](#)  
**To:** [Martin J Sommer](#)  
**Cc:** [CalMod@caltrain.com](mailto:CalMod@caltrain.com); [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](mailto:Board (@caltrain.com)); [city.council@cityofpalto.org](mailto:city.council@cityofpalto.org)  
**Subject:** RE: University Ave Beige Pole Color  
**Date:** Thursday, July 15, 2021 4:27:16 PM

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Hi Martin,

Thanks for your patience as I discussed internally with the project team. Please see our responses below.

1. You mention in the video, the "Portal" type pole option for University Ave station, but you have never answered my original question of "why it was not used". Can you please answer this?

Center poles were selected where possible to reduce the impact to the removal of trees. There are three main types of poles used along the corridor, single side poles, two track cantilevers (on one side), and center poles. The use of each pole is dependent on the site conditions, including utilities and the clearance between the tracks. **Where feasible, center poles were chosen in order to reduce the number trees pruned or removed required to provide clearance for the electrical safety zone (ESZ).** The ESZ is typically 10 feet from the farthest electrified element in most cases. A center pole has the ESZ set by the train pantograph as that is the electrified element that is farthest out. With single side poles, the electrical safety zone is set by the pole location which supports an electrified wire. Many cities and communities made comments as part of the environmental review process stating a preference for center poles where possible to both reduce the number of poles and reduce the impact to trees.

2. The 45 foot center poles installed, are 10 feet taller than the 35 foot poles presented to the City. A 30% increase in height, should have been passed back to the City for review. Wouldn't you agree?

The designs presented to the ARB/HRB were preliminary and were subject to change. The height is a technical requirement that cannot be modified so it was not brought to the committee for input/review. We provided an opportunity to the ARB/HRB to review and make a recommendation on the pole color since options were possible on the color selection.

3. You stated that the paint life expediency to be 10 years. This clearly indicates, an expectation for Caltrain to paint these poles on a regular basis, and would suggest that painting equipment is already planned for the project. Is it?

Caltrain will be working on an overall maintenance plan which will include the maintenance of the facilities installed during the Electrification Project. There are not concrete plans to repaint the poles at this time, but any plans to repaint for maintenance needs will be included in the overall maintenance plan for the electrified system.

4. As stated from the City official Furth, the City "advises", and Caltrain "decides". If I am able to get the Palo Alto ARB to advise/recommend/request painting the top portion of poles in the University Ave station to the City standard of Marine Green, how much weight with Caltrain, will this carry?

The pole colors were presented to and selected by the ARB/HRB and Caltrain has considered those choices (confirmed by the City) final. Revisiting color decisions made would not be supported by Caltrain. The project team's focus is on providing adequate resources and funding to finish the infrastructure work and signal work for project completion by 2024.

Best,  
Brent

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**From:** Martin J Sommer [mailto:martin@sommer.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 25, 2021 5:42 PM  
**To:** Tietjen, Brent <TietjenB@samtrans.com>  
**Cc:** CalMod@caltrain.com; Board (@caltrain.com) <BoardCaltrain@samtrans.com>; city.council@cityofpaloalto.org  
**Subject:** Re: University Ave Beige Pole Color

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Hi Brett,

I finally found time to review the January 10th, 2019 City of Palo Alto video recommenced below, and have a few followup questions:

1. You mention in the video, the "Portal" type pole option for University Ave station, but you have never answered my original question of "why it was not used". Can you please answer this?
2. The 45 foot center poles installed, are 10 feet taller than the 35 foot poles presented to the City. A 30% increase in height, should have been passed back to the City for review. Wouldn't you agree?
3. You stated that the paint life expediency to be 10 years. This clearly indicates, an expectation for Caltrain to paint these poles on a regular basis, and would suggest that painting equipment is already planned for the project. Is it?
4. As stated from the City official Furth, the City "advises", and Caltrain "decides". If I am able to get the Palo Alto ARB to advise/recommend/request painting the top portion of poles in the University Ave station to the City standard of Marine Green, how much weight with Caltrain, will this carry?

Thanks again,  
Martin

On 4/13/21 12:46 PM, Tietjen, Brent wrote:

Hi Martin,

The joint ARB/HRB meeting was held on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019. The City of Palo Alto records and uploads videos of these Board meetings for review. The full video of the presentation, including photo simulations shown to the Board, and the ARB/HRB member discussion and decision can be seen on this page <https://midpenmedia.org/architectural-review-board-74-1102019/>.

Thanks,  
Brent

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**From:** Martin J Sommer [<mailto:martin@sommer.net>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 13, 2021 9:59 AM  
**To:** Tietjen, Brent <[TietjenB@samtrans.com](mailto:TietjenB@samtrans.com)>; [CalMod@caltrain.com](mailto:CalMod@caltrain.com)  
**Cc:** Board (@caltrain.com) <[BoardCaltrain@samtrans.com](mailto:BoardCaltrain@samtrans.com)>; [city.council@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:city.council@cityofpaloalto.org); Pat Burt <[pat@patburt.org](mailto:pat@patburt.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: University Ave Beige Pole Color

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Thanks Brent, looks like "bait and switch" to me.

Can you please send me the photos presented to the Palo Alto ARB? You mentioned them in the prior email, but they were not included with the ARB report.

We need to get this issue resolved.

Thank you,  
Martin

On 4/13/21 9:16 AM, Tietjen, Brent wrote:

Hi Martin,

Thanks for your patience. I believe your questions are related and hope the below information below is helpful.

The image you are referencing was a rendering that was created before the final design of the pole and foundation locations was complete. This rendering was also complete prior to the ARB/HRB decision on pole colors for the station area.

There are three main types of poles used along the corridor, single side

poles, two track cantilevers (on one side), and center poles. The use of each pole is dependent on the site conditions, including utilities and the clearance between the tracks. Where feasible, center poles were chosen in order to reduce the number trees pruned or removed required to provide clearance for the electrical safety zone (ESZ). The ESZ is typically 10 feet from the farthest electrified element in most cases. A center pole has the ESZ set by the train pantograph as that is the electrified element that is farthest out. With single side poles, the electrical safety zone is set by the pole location which supports an electrified wire.

Thanks,  
Brent

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**From:** Martin J Sommer [<mailto:martin@sommer.net>]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 29, 2021 9:28 AM  
**To:** [CalMod@caltrain.com](mailto:CalMod@caltrain.com)  
**Cc:** Board (@caltrain.com) <[BoardCaltrain@samtrans.com](mailto:BoardCaltrain@samtrans.com)>; [city.council@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:city.council@cityofpaloalto.org); Pat Burt <[pat@patburt.org](mailto:pat@patburt.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: University Ave Beige Pole Color

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Thanks Brent, appreciate you staying on this issue.

In addition, please see the attached photo. This vision of Caltrain rolling into the University Ave station in Palo Alto, is one of the most widely distributed photos of the Caltrain Electrification Project. Notice: a) short poles, b) back color, and c) symmetric north and south cantilevers. What we received in Palo Alto, bears no resemblance to this?

What went wrong, and can we please fix it?

Martin

On 3/27/21 6:22 PM, [CalMod@caltrain.com](mailto:CalMod@caltrain.com) wrote:

Hi Martin,

Yes, I will work to get this information from the project team.

Best,  
Brent

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**From:** Martin J Sommer [<mailto:martin@sommer.net>]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 15, 2021 2:15 PM  
**To:** [CalMod@caltrain.com](mailto:CalMod@caltrain.com)  
**Cc:** Board (@caltrain.com) <[BoardCaltrain@samtrans.com](mailto:BoardCaltrain@samtrans.com)>;  
[city.council@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:city.council@cityofpaloalto.org); Pat Burt <[pat@patburt.org](mailto:pat@patburt.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: University Ave Beige Pole Color

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Hi Brent,

I am still working on this issue. When we talked via phone, you offered to look into why the tall single poles were used at the University Ave station, vs two shorter poles on the side, with or without a crossbar. The Cal Ave station, uses two shorter poles, placed right on the platform.

Can you please answer that for me?

Thanks,  
Martin

On 1/13/21 9:58 AM, Martin J Sommer wrote:

Hi Brent,

Thanks for talking this morning. Yes, please try to put a number on repainting the top half of one or more poles at the University Ave station. Once we have this number, I will reach out to the City Of Palo Alto, for potential funding sources.

Best regards,  
Martin

On 12/22/20 7:49 PM, Martin J Sommer  
wrote:

+cc: Pat Bert

Brent, please take a look at the  
attached photo. I don't think this  
is what the City, nor the design  
engineers, had in mind.

Please tell me, how I can help  
correct this situation.

Thank you,  
Martin

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Martin Sommer  
650-346-5307  
[martin@sommer.net](mailto:martin@sommer.net)  
[www.linkedin.com/in/martinsommer](http://www.linkedin.com/in/martinsommer)

"Turn technical vision into reality."

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"Turn technical vision into reality."

**From:** [City of South San Francisco](#)  
**To:** [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](mailto:Board (@caltrain.com))  
**Subject:** New Auto Body Shop Added | FREE Catalytic Converter Etching Event in SSF next week! July 19 - 23 - Help deter thieves from stealing your catalytic converter!  
**Date:** Friday, July 16, 2021 8:17:27 AM

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## COMMUNITY ALERT

# **FREE** Catalytic Converter Etching Event in South San Francisco!

**July 19 - 23, 2021**

### **Royalty Auto Collision Center**

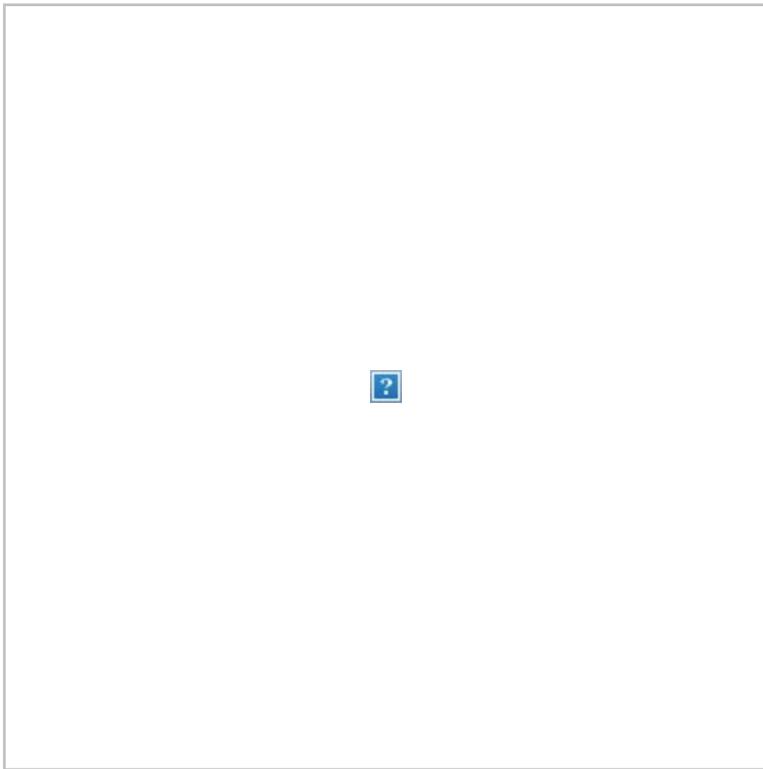
476 Victory Avenue, South San Francisco

Must call to make an appointment

**(650) 875-7773**

Etching your license plate number on your car's catalytic converter will assist officers in locating its original owner in the event it is stolen and recovered. The reason why thieves are going after these is that once they are taken off the vehicle, they are untraceable. This is your opportunity to protect yourself against becoming a victim.

**Car owners of a Honda Element, Toyota Prius, and Ford E250  
are especially vulnerable!**



City of South San Francisco | 400 Grand Avenue, South San Francisco, CA 94080

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