



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

**Clerk of the Board of Supervisors**  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

**Submitted on:**  
**(COB Stamp)**

**Department Name:** Community Services and  
Public Works  
**Department No.:** 057 and 054  
**Agenda Date:** September 23, 2025  
**Placement:** Administrative Agenda  
**Estimated Time:** N/A  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:** N/A  
**Vote Required:** Majority

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Department Director(s): Jesús Armas, Director, Community Services  
Chris Sneddon, Director, Public Works  
Contact: Jill Van Wie, Capital Program Manager, Community Services  
Mostafa Estaji, Deputy Director, Public Works  
**SUBJECT:** Union Pacific Railroad Public Pedestrian At-Grade Crossing Agreement for the Santa  
Claus Lane Streetscape Improvements and Beach Access Project;  
First Supervisorial District

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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Other Concurrence:** Risk Management

As to form: Yes

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Other Concurrence:** N/A

**Recommended Actions:**

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Approve and authorize the Chair to execute a Public Pedestrian At-Grade Crossing Agreement with Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) (Attachment A) to allow the County to install and maintain a new at grade public pedestrian crossing within the UPRR right-of-way as part of the Santa Claus Lane Streetscape Improvements and Beach Access Project (Project);
- b) Approve and authorize the Chair to execute the First Amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments to increase the budget allocation from \$7,620,000 to \$8,370,000 for additional reimbursement to the County of Santa Barbara for work on the Santa Claus Lane Streetscape Improvements and Beach Access Project; and
- c) Determine that pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15162, no substantial changes are proposed to the project, and no new information of substantial importance has come to light regarding environmental effects of the project,

and therefore these actions are within the scope of the project covered by the Mitigated Negative Declaration (19NGD-00000-00005) adopted by the County of Santa Barbara on September 30, 2019, and that therefore no new environmental document is required.

**Summary Text:**

The UPRR Public Pedestrian At-Grade Crossing Agreement (Agreement) is required by UPRR in order for the County to proceed with construction of the Phase 2 Santa Claus Lane Streetscape Improvements and Beach Access Project, which includes streetscape improvements, a multiuse path, and a pedestrian railroad crossing for public beach access. The Project is a requirement of the County-adopted Coastal Land Use Plan Amendment for the 101 Freeway Project and is also a condition for Caltrans to complete under their Coastal Development Permit for the Freeway Project. The County took the lead on delivering the project at the request of Caltrans and SBCAG with agreement that the project would be fully funded by Caltrans.

The UPRR Agreement sanctions construction and requires long-term maintenance and repair of at-grade pedestrian railroad crossing elements located within UPRR right-of-way, including the pedestrian crossing and appurtenances, fencing, gates and an ADA boardwalk over the existing rock revetment at Santa Claus Lane Beach. The UPRR Agreement has initial fees of \$1,896,777, including land use and UPRR signal and track panel construction, and annual fees of \$27,517 for track and signal maintenance plus County costs to maintain approximately 2,000 linear feet of cable and sand fencing on the south side of the railroad tracks. The \$744,975 land use portion of the initial fee, due upon execution of the Agreement and prior to construction, will be funded upon the Board approval of the MOU. A separate agreement will need to be developed with SBCAG and Caltrans to fully fund construction of this crossing and the other work included in the Project, as well as future phases of the work.

Execution of the Agreement with UPRR is necessary for the County to secure the construction funding allocation from the California Transportation Commission (CTC) for the Project. Construction of the crossing will occur by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) permitted timeframe of February 2026 in conjunction with phased construction completion of the Santa Claus Lane streetscape improvements being implemented through County Public Works (Public Works).

**Discussion:**

The Project will formalize beach access to Santa Claus Lane Beach by securing public access rights and constructing a pedestrian accessway over the existing railroad tracks between Santa Claus Lane and Santa Claus Lane Beach. The beach access and safety improvements are part of a master circulation improvement plan, the Santa Claus Lane Streetscape Improvement projects, along the entire length of Santa Claus Lane. The improvements are connected to the Highway 101 widening and are focused on improving public safety, formalizing and increasing coastal access parking, improving multi-modal transportation circulation, improving management of storm water runoff, providing an authorized coastal access point across UPRR railroad facilities, providing public restrooms, and improving aesthetics along Santa Claus Lane. Community Services, Public Works, and Planning and Development have been coordinating and developing these projects in adherence to community development and coastal access plan goals and key issues identified in the Toro Canyon Community Plan (2004) and Local Coastal Plan (2019). The Santa Claus Lane Streetscape Improvement projects have been developed in cooperation with Caltrans and the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) to integrate with recently constructed highway and associated improvements. The CPUC and UPRR have been key partners in the development of the Project in order to provide safe, legal public access across the railroad tracks to the coastal resources of Santa Claus Lane Beach.

Approval of the MOU will allow the County to move forward with the UPRR Agreement. Additional funding to move the project into construction will need to be identified by Caltrans and SBCAG. This Project will complete the first two phases of the scope identified in Caltrans' Coastal Development Permit for the 101 Freeway. Staff will continue to work with SBCAG and Caltrans on implementation of the remaining scopes through future phases.

**Background:**

The Santa Claus Lane Streetscape Improvement and Beach Access projects are located along Santa Claus Lane in the unincorporated area of the County between Summerland and the City of Carpinteria. Santa Claus Lane Beach is a popular destination for locals, tourists, and families due to its laid-back charm, wide beaches, and direct access from US Highway 101 and adjacent local bus routes. The Santa Claus Lane Improvement projects have been divided into project phases due to programming of construction funding availability. Phase 1 of the Santa Claus Lane Streetscape Improvement Project was developed by Public Works with anticipated construction completion by September 2025. Construction costs for this phase were covered by the original \$7,620,000 MOU with SBCAG. Phase 2 of the project includes the Santa Claus Lane Beach Access Project. Design of the Project has been completed and is pending final review by Caltrans and UPRR. Construction will commence once full funding is secured but must occur by February 2026 in accordance with the CPUC permit. The Santa Claus Lane Streetscape Improvement projects will provide an overall regional benefit for traffic circulation and safe coastal access.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

Budgeted: No

**Fiscal Analysis:**

Funding Source	FY 25/26	Total
SBCAG Measure A	\$750,000	<b>\$750,000</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$750,000</b>

Total land use fee due to UPRR upon execution of the Agreement is \$744,975 and is funded by SBCAG Measure A funds.

Remaining project costs for construction of the Project, inclusive of the estimated \$1,151,802 UPRR construction costs, will be budgeted via future Board actions once funding is secured. Annual maintenance fees for the Agreement are estimated to be \$27,517, commence after three years of the crossing being in service, and are anticipated to be paid for by the County General Fund.

**Special Instructions:**

After Board action, please distribute as follows via email and intraoffice mail to Jill Van Wie and Christian Doolittle:

1. A certified, stamped Minute Order approving these Board Actions
2. Two partially executed original MOU Amendment #1 Agreements

The Community Services Department will return one fully executed Agreement (Attachment A) and one fully executed MOU Amendment #1 (Attachment B) to remain on file with the Clerk of the Board.

**Attachments:**

**Attachment A** – Public Pedestrian Crossing Agreement with Union Pacific Railroad

**Attachment B** – Santa Claus Lane Streetscape Improvements MOU First Amendment

**Attachment C** – 2024 Executed MOU with SBCAG for Santa Claus Lane Streetscape Improvements

**Contact Information:**

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Christian Doolittle, PW Engineering Manager II, [cdoolit@countyofsb.org](mailto:cdoolit@countyofsb.org)