



Expanded Community Advisory Panel (XCAP) Meeting #1 Summary

Meeting name

XCAP Meeting #1

Subject

Connecting Palo Alto
Palo Alto Grade Separation Study

Meeting date and time

June 19, 2019
4:00pm-6:00pm

Location

Palo Alto City Hall
Community Room
250 Hamilton Ave, Palo Alto

Prepared by

Eileen Goodwin, Apex Strategies

Speaker Attendees

Ed Shikada, City Manager (PA)
Chantal Gaines (PA)
Etty Mercurio, Project Manager (AECOM)
Millette Litzinger, Deputy Project Manager (AECOM)
Peter DeStefano, Engineer (AECOM)
Paul Peninger (AECOM)
Eileen Goodwin (Apex Strategies)

Project Team in Attendance

Wayne Tanda, (PA)

XCAP Member Attendees

Barbara Best
Phil Burton
Tony Carrasco
Inyoung Cho
Larry Klein
Judy Kleinberg
Adina Levin
Nadia Naik
Keith Reckdahl
David Shen

Not Able to Attend

Gregory Brail
Megan Kanne
Pat Lau

Ref Action

- | Ref | Action |
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| 01 | City to create a XCAP roster |
| 02 | City to research the possibility of creating some sort of email group that is transparent to the public, so they group can communicate between meetings |
| 03 | City to research a way for the XCAP Members to receive emails from the public without necessarily using their personal emails |
| 04 | Track the VTA Measure B process closely and alert XCAP members to any Board actions so they have the opportunity to provide testimony should they choose |

Agenda

The Meeting agenda included:

- Welcome and Background
- Introductions
- Overview of XCAP Role and Schedule
- Overview of Council-Adopted Evaluation Criteria
- Review of Alternatives Still under Consideration
- Funding Update
- Summary of Action Items / Next Meeting
- Adjourn and Thank You

There is an audio tape of the meeting presentations and the PowerPoint is archived on the XCAP website. They are not re-summarized below.

Comments/Questions

Below is a summary of the comments and questions received and the responses provided. Action items from these comments/questions are summarize above.

Table 1. Summary of Comments/Questions and Responses

Comment/Questions	Responses
Introductions	
<p>There were several requests for methods to allow XCAP Members to communicate with each other. The action items are captured above. A Public Comment was given that cautioned the group to keep the process transparent and accessible to the public. The public suggested a Yahoo Group where the public could subscribe to receive updates.</p>	<p>See action Items above. (01-03)</p>
<p>How many of the original members chose to continue?</p>	<p>Eight of the twelve are continuing as members of the Advisory Panel.</p>
XCAP Role and Schedule	
<p>This group is advisory to staff and the Project Team. Will the staff be communicating with the Council what comes out of this effort?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>Can the Project Team distribute the PowerPoint to the XCAP much earlier so the XCAP members will have an opportunity to review it prior to the meeting?</p>	<p>The Team will do its best to distribute the PowerPoint as early as possible.</p>
<p>Can the public use this XCAP meeting to present and propose things?</p>	<p>Yes, this has worked before. Of course, the more notice the public/XCAP members can give to the Project Team with new information or suggestions, then the more time they could have on the agenda.</p>
<p>Please explain how this effort will interface with the Downtown Area Plan effort?</p>	<p>The original scope for the Project Team included work in the Downtown area. It became clear that the whole planning effort and the stakeholders related to the Downtown were on a different path so that work was taken out of this effort. The City staff are working on finding the resources to start that effort as soon as practical.</p>
<p>Why isn't Stanford on the XCAP?</p>	<p>They were invited but have chosen to observe and not accept a seat at the table. That said, City staff and Stanford staff meet regularly regarding these topics and others.</p>
<p>Why do we show a schedule that goes to the Council for a decision on October 28th but have a meeting of the XCAP scheduled for October 30th?</p>	<p>That is a placeholder in case the Council does not take action on the 28th.</p>
<p>We should make sure the City staff are following the Measure B expenditure process and that the XCAP members are alerted to any proposed VTA action so we can testify. Also, VTA just had the Grand Jury make a report about their operations.</p>	<p>We added this item to track the Measure B to the action items log and will include in future agendas. (04)</p>
Overview of Council Adopted Evaluation Criteria	
<p>No comments were noted.</p>	
Alternatives Still Under Consideration	
<p>What are costs of the trench per mile or per foot?</p>	<p>The Meadow/Charleston trench alternative is estimated to cost \$370-\$450 million per mile.</p>

Comment/Questions

Responses

<p>What are the pump maintenance costs?</p>	<p>Pumping maintenance costs will be provided at the Design Charette.</p>
<p>Will the reduction in lane width of Alma shown in the video for the trench be permanent or temporary?</p>	<p>Temporary, but construction duration is a few years long. Once the shoofly is removed Alma can be put back to its current configuration.</p>
<p>Will all those trees be removed as shown in the video? Will they be replaced? How many?</p>	<p>Yes, they will be removed. The environmental process will be able to define how and where they could be replaced. They will be counted and assessed as part of the environmental process. The trench option does not allow for replacement on site due to tie backs that hold the trench walls up. Shrubs could be possible.</p>
<p>What about the noise difference between options? Will there be information about that?</p>	<p>Most of these alternatives are fairly similar in regard to noise impacts in the neighborhood. The detailed noise assessments will be done as part of the environmental process.</p>
<p>Noise report are not part of the XCAP deliberations?</p>	<p>It is assumed that all noise impacts will be mitigated under each alternative, however, it is one of the evaluation criteria.</p>
<p>Is there an option that doesn't impact the cross streets by lowering them?</p>	<p>Yes, the full viaduct would leave the cross streets as they are.</p>
<p>How much does a split option raise and lower?</p>	<p>The Railroad would be raised 12' above current grade plus the structure depth of an additional 5'. Then there would also be the electrification poles even higher than that along the alignment. The street would be lowered about 5'to 7' or so.</p>
<p>Is Caltrain ok with the new curve?</p>	<p>The railroad curves for the viaduct meet Caltrain's design standards. The City Team and Caltrain are continuing to coordinate.</p>
<p>What about the existing area and the shoofly on the last alternative?</p>	<p>There is no need for a shoofly with the viaduct, so the conflict you are raising does not occur.</p>
<p>Is it possible to have a more open design on what is being shown as embankment? I think the open design is better.</p>	<p>Yes, it is possible to have a more open design. However, it does cost more to provide structures than the embankments.</p>
<p>The Caltrain Business Plan is anticipating four times the passengers and more passing tracks. Do these designs allow for the passing tracks?</p>	<p>The City of Palo Alto is in on-going conversation with the Caltrain Business Plan team regarding this topic. They have not yet been able to define what they need and we are anxious to get our decisions made as soon as possible to get the Measure B funds. The City has formally commented on</p>

Comment/Questions

Responses

	this topic as part of the Business Plan process.
I think the Measure B money should be distributed evenly between the three cities by a certain amount per grade separation.	Comment noted.

Funding Update

Are these amounts shown yearly or total?	Most are total amounts.
Can you handicap these various funding sources?	That work exists in a Community Meeting PowerPoint that is on the website. https://pagradesep.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/20181128-PaloAlto_RailPM_Rail_CC1_mtg_v8.pdf

We have a representative here from the Business Community, what do you think of these business taxes? What was said at the Finance Committee Meeting last night?	Business Representative: The business community is concerned. They do not want the Council or the Community to assume they can absorb increased taxes. There are differences along the spectrum of the ideas that are under consideration and where lines would be drawn as far as number of employees before additional fees or taxes would apply. There is also an issue about timing. Many think we are headed into a economic downturn. The Finance Committee decided not to continue pursuing the gross receipts tax.
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TIFIA is a loan not a grant.	That is correct. TIFIA would need to be paid back to the Federal government.
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How long of a duration do these totals represent?	The estimates are assuming 30-year durations.
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How would the City repay a loan?	Possibly the general fund revenues, but the specific pay back scenario is unknown at this time.
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Churchill Pedestrian/Bicycle Crossing Alternatives

What about looking at crossing near Pierce Park? If Churchill is closed, Southgate neighbors have suggested opening up Pierce Park connection.	This has been mentioned previously but is not an option currently being considered.
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The pedestrian plan utilizing the middle of the street looks unsafe. I am an architect.	Comment noted.
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How wide would the entrance be?	Ten feet wide, by comparison California Avenue is currently eight feet wide.
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Public Comment: Leave Churchill open. Put in quad gates for safety. Maybe at some future time we can look at closing it.	Comment noted.
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There has been previous work done about “unclearable queues” can this be revisited?	It is part of the AECOM scope amendment.
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Comment/Questions

Responses

<p>Public Comment: The bike crossing assumes Churchill is closed. In the meantime, we should leave it open. I am happy about a new traffic consultant coming on board.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<p>The school buses use Churchill. This closure would be an impact on school routes and cause additional trip time. Re-routing would be a big deal for the school district.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<p>We didn't discuss the Palo Alto Alma crossing.</p>	<p>That crossing has been split from this effort and will be looked at as part of the Downtown planning effort. That effort will start soon, and it will also look at the crossing at University Avenue.</p>
<p>Traffic on Palo Alto Avenue should be looked at as part of these options.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<p>Impacts on Palo Alto Avenue will be constrained by Churchill and Embarcadero decisions.</p>	<p>Comment noted. The Downtown issues are complex and involve Stanford and others.</p>
<p>Public Comment: I was expecting to see a viaduct option at Churchill. I would like to see that option. I think a tunnel in a road would be problematic.</p>	<p>The viaduct option for Churchill is in the AECOM scope amendment. It will be considered.</p>
<p>Please describe the new traffic consultant's scope. Will there be new traffic counts? Will they look at mitigations?</p>	<p>The team will need to get them on board first, so they can look at the existing data and determine if new counts are necessary. Mitigations are part of their scope.</p>
<p>I live near the tracks on Churchill. I understand why the viaduct needs to be studied, but I am concerned about impacts to the neighbors. The viaduct is industrial looking. We do not want that in our neighborhood. There will be backyard impacts. We need to evaluate it, but there are petitions with over 400 signatures already. There is no room at Churchill.</p>	<p>Comments noted</p>

Next Steps

See above action items.