



Community Advisory Panel (CAP) Meeting #2 Summary

Meeting name

CAP Meeting #2

SubjectConnecting Palo Alto
Palo Alto Grade Separation Study**Meeting date and time**September 17, 2018
4:00pm-6:00pm**Location**Palo Alto City Hall
Community Room
250 Hamilton Ave, Palo Alto**Prepared by**

Eileen Goodwin, Apex Strategies

Other Speaker AttendeesEd Shikada, Assistant City Manager (PA)
Rob de Geus, Deputy City Manager (PA)
Ety Mercurio, Project Manager (AECOM)
John Maher, Rail Engineer (AECOM)
Nayan Amin (TJKM)
Paul Peninger (AECOM)
Eileen Goodwin (Apex Strategies)**Project Team in Attendance**Claudia Keith (PA)

Milette Litzinger, Deputy Project Manager (AECOM)
Ruta Jariwala (TJKM)**CAP Member Attendees**Mandar Borkar
Gregory Brail
Phil Burton
Tony Carrasco
Inyoung Cho
Kari Hodgeson
Megan Kanne
Pat Lau
Christine Logan
Nadia Naik
Parag Patkar**Not Able to Attend**

David Shen

Ref	Action	Initial
01	Provide Caltrain Electrification Benefits factsheet to the CAP	City
02	City to work on messaging and answering the 20 questions and update the FAQs on the website	City/AECOM
03	Add land use context to next CAP meeting agenda	City/Apex
04	Get a copy of the Community Meeting Boards to a CAP member to start a check out system	AECOM/City
05	City to consider a partnership with the schools and the creation of a video for students and their parents.	City
06	Send soft copy of the traffic map to the CAP for circulation and comment by COB September 24 th .	City/AECOM/TJKM
07	Add traffic scope discussion to the September 26 th Rail Committee agenda.	City
08	Send traffic map, definition for the traffic terms and post the CAP PowerPoint as soon as possible.	City/AECOM/TJKM
09	Team to look at various business and employee related tax financing options	AECOM
10	Distribute to the CAP the historic context grade separation financing document	City

Agenda

The Meeting agenda included:

- Welcome and Introductions
- Caltrain Electrification
- Community Conversations
- Debrief of Community Meeting
- Debrief of Outreach Materials and Website
- Mailing
- Traffic Scope
- Alternatives Update

- Financial Discussion
- Summary of Action Items/Next Meeting—October 10th, 4pm-6pm
- Adjourn

There is a video tape of the meeting presentations and the PowerPoint is archived on the CAP website. They are not re-summarized below.

Next CAP Meeting

October 10, 2018, 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
 Palo Alto City Hall, Community Room, 250 Hamilton Ave, Palo Alto, CA

Comments/Questions

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

Table 1. Summary of Comments/Questions and Responses

Comment/Questions	Responses
Introductions	
.	Announcement Josh Mello has left the City and Rob DeGeus is the new point of contact.
Caltrain Electrification	
Caltrain has another factsheet that focuses on regional benefits that would be good to pass out. (01)	There is information on the Caltrain website. Here is the link: http://www.caltrain.com/Assets/Caltrain+Modernization+Program/images/Economic+Opportunities+Infographic.pdf
How many more trains will be run with electrification?	There are ten trains now that will go to twelve and perhaps more depending upon the outcome of the Caltrain Business Plan effort.
Community Conversations	
In some conversations I have had with my neighbors they have provided the following observations: 1) There is still confusion over how Churchill is only being looked at as a closure? Who made that decision and why? 2) Confusion on trench option and how will creeks be addressed or do the creeks make that option a non-starter? 3) We need freight train information. We need to understand the freight service better.	Please work with the City on using materials from the Project Team for consistent messaging when you do your speaking engagements.
We need to articulate whether the “status quo” is still in play. Are we OK with doing nothing? Need to understand the traffic impacts and changes better.	Comments noted. We will look at how we present and message all of these issues.
We need to articulate whether the “status quo” is still in play. Are we OK with doing nothing? Need to understand the traffic impacts and changes better.	Comments noted. Traffic scope is on today’s agenda and will be presented at the November meeting.
Is suicide prevention a topic we care about? It seems that there are community members who feel that injuries are just part of having a train through town. Is this a concern for the CAP?	Comments noted.

Comment/Questions	Responses
There were 20 questions I have gathered from the community and gave to Rob and Eileen. When can we see answers?	We will review how they match our existing FAQs. (02)
The community needs to understand the other road improvements such as Embarcadero and University.	Comments noted.
The community needs to understand what the relationship of this effort is to the existing grade separations.	Comment noted.
The community is saying no one group should impose on another part of the community.	Comment noted.
Community is saying the City should be aspirational. The plan should be comprehensive. There should be consideration of Downtown. There should be better connections for bicycles and pedestrians.	Comments noted. The land use context is something we should discuss at the next CAP meeting. (03)
CAP members should have access to the Boards so we can do presentations.	The City will provide a copy to the CAP members that can be checked out at the City. (04)

Community Meeting Debrief

There were people who still want to see costs and more 3-D visuals	Both of those topics will be covered at the November community meeting.
The table/stations were a great idea. There should have been more time budgeted for the stations. The stations were crowded and not all questions were answered. Maybe CAP members can help at the stations at the November meeting.	Comments noted.

Project Mailing

The idea of a citywide mailing is a good one.	Comment noted.
We should look at doing a partnership with the schools. Maybe we should make a video about the project that would be appropriate for students and their parents. The City School Safety Committee should be coordinated with.	The City can look into that. (05)

Traffic

Will construction traffic be analyzed?	Yes, but not in the first phase of work.
Will counts be taken 24 hours a day, seven days a week?	Yes.
Are pedestrian and bike safety issues considered?	Yes, we will be looking at collision data.
What about Waze and Google, do you use data from them?	That information is not really helpful for this type of analysis as we are looking at average delay not travel time. Waze and Google are good for trip duration information.
Public: What is the partial closure?	It is assumed there would be gates down during the peak periods, so it is considered the same as a closure for the traffic analysis.
Will you make sure City schools, Stanford and Castilleja be in session when counts are taken?	Yes.

Comment/Questions	Responses
Public: Churchill closure should include the analysis of impacts to East Meadow and Charleston.	Yes.
Will Middlefield be analyzed?	Yes, counts will be taken in multiple locations.
Is the model granular?	It is a planning level model. In any traffic analysis we have found that traffic varies from day to day by about 10% per study area whether an intersection or a road link. The model is granular enough to be used for planning level analysis.
Public: Does the City modeling effort include modelling Ravenswood and the bike undercrossing there? If not, that is an oversight.	No. This effort is for places in Palo Alto only.
Are the counts done all at the same time?	Yes. They are taken for a week 24/7.
Thank you for allowing us to give input before you do this work. Can we get a soft copy of this map to share with our communities for feedback?	Yes. Feedback will be due next Monday September 24 th at 5p.m., so that it can be included in the Rail Committee presentation on 9/26. (06)
Can this topic be added to the Rail Committee so we have another opportunity to give input?	We will add it to the September 26 th Rail Committee agenda. (07)
Will the construction traffic analysis use the same intersections or different ones?	There will be a mix depending on which design options are being considered.
Public: Can we spread out when the counts are collected?	No. The team is on a tight deadline to get ready for the November community meeting and these counts need to be taken soon and reviewed prior to that meeting.
Public: Can you look at counts on Hawthorn and Everett?	Yes.
Does the work take into account planned bike improvements?	Yes.
Please send traffic map, definition for the traffic terms and post the CAP PowerPoint as soon as possible. (08)	Comments noted.

Alternatives

Are you assuming the freight trains are in the tunnel?	Yes.
Are you aware of the London Cross Town Tunnel?	Yes, this under different conditions.
Would you need to take homes to accommodate the construction of the pit to place the tunnel boring machine?	Yes. The project needs approximately 160' in width.
Are you considering stations?	Yes. The assumption is they would be mined.
Is this a "city-wide" tunnel?	It is assumed to start from the north after University Ave and go south until the City limits. It cannot go further north to the City limit due to the constraints at the north end of Palo Alto.

Comment/Questions

Responses

The community is interested in looking at keeping the freight at the surface and placing Caltrain in a trench below the freight. If freight is separated from Caltrain, how would that impact the engineering aspects (plan and profile) of an alignment?	The team will come back to the CAP and inform them of the design differences if only Caltrain is considered (without freight).
Currently, there are three freight trips per day and they are at night. Leaving the freight at the surface would not be an issue.	Comment noted.
What is the cost difference with and without freight in the tunnel?	Initial response is that there would not be a big difference in cost. There will also be on-going costs if the freight is on the surface as gates would need to be operated, track maintained etc.
What about the existing tunnels near San Francisco that use 18-ft for the vertical clearance?	The existing tunnels will be retrofitted to accommodate Caltrain electrification catenary.
Public: What is the schedule to take the tunnel or trench out of consideration?	The Council will not be making any final decisions on what moves forward until first quarter 2019.
Public: The trench has fatal flaws?	Yes, the creeks are a challenge for the trench option. There really isn't a good solution.
Public: What is happening in South Palo Alto? This discussion seems very focussed on the northern part of Palo Alto.	The tunnel needs 150' and that would require taking some right-of-way there as well.
Public: Is there criteria for making these decisions?	Yes. The Council adopted criteria and it is on the City Council website.

Finance Discussion

Is Palo Alto prohibited under Prop 13 for raising property taxes without a vote?	Yes.
We need to see total costs and total amounts of assessments on these graphics.	Comment noted.
The team should consider a business tax, an employee tax, and a head count tax. All of these ideas are being done elsewhere and there is energy around looking at those mechanisms here. It is in the businesses interests and Stanford's interest to get these crossing in place for their mobility of their employees. (09)	We can look into that.
The business tax would be local in Palo Alto?	Yes, it could be.
The CFD map graphic is scary. Taxing people for something they perceive as making their lives worse will be hard.	Comment noted.
I want to learn more about bond and interest, terms, length of payback etc.	Comments noted.
The property tax or community facilities district, who would vote on that?	It would either be a city-wide vote if it were a tax placed on all properties or a smaller number of property owners if it was a CFD in a smaller geographic area. It would need 2/3 to pass.
We should be looking at a regional solution as this is being caused by a regional project.	Good idea. A regional or sub-regional solution would be ideal.
Why isn't Caltrain paying for the grade separations?	There is no dedicated funding source to fund Caltrain. The Caltrain Business Plan may propose a more regional solution and funding plan.

Comment/Questions

Responses

<p>Is it possible to have a mix of funding sources?</p>	<p>Yes. That is the most likely outcome.</p>
<p>Are you aware of the previously written white paper on this topic?</p>	<p>Yes, we are in the process of updating it.</p>
<p>Public: There should be something done regionally. We need leadership. The leadership needs to come from staff at the City. We need to be talking with our neighboring cities.</p>	<p>The City managers already do meet regularly to discuss the grade separation program at VTA. There is also a policy group that is convened around Caltrain upgrades. We are definitely talking with our neighbors.</p>
<p>Public: When you are speaking with the public, please indicate what any bonds would do to the City's ability to bond for other needs. What will these bonds do to our property values? What are the Public private partnership opportunities here? What about developer fees? What can be raised by them? I have heard it will take the equivalent of seven Salesforce towers –is our City really wanting that level of development to be able to pay for tunnels, etc.? We should look at a viaduct. We need to be careful to not tax all of us to pay for something that only impacts/mitigates a few properties.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
<p>There is a great disparity of property valuations here. It is profound the difference of those who have been here a long time compared to the newer residents. We need to make things equitable and find a “we, us and ours” solution. Tax a lot of people to spread the burden of any taxation.</p>	<p>Comments noted</p>
<p>Distribute to the CAP the historic context financing document regarding financing roads and bridges in California in the 1950's. (10)</p>	<p>Will do.</p>