



Community Advisory Panel (CAP) Meeting #5 Summary

Meeting name

CAP Meeting #5

Subject

Connecting Palo Alto
Palo Alto Grade Separation Study

Meeting date and time

December 12, 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 Attendees

Rob de Geus, Deputy City Manager (PA)
Millette Litzinger, Dep Project Manager (AECOM)
John Maher, Engineer, (AECOM)
Paul Penniger (AECOM)
Eileen Goodwin (Apex Strategies)

Project Team in Attendance

Jarrett Mullen (PA)
Chantal Gaines (PA)

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
David Shen

Not Able to Attend

None

Ref	Action
01	Add discussion of Embarcadero to January CAP agenda under traffic discussion
02	There is a desire to consider adding "no build" to the matrix and comparison discussions and economic impact calculations
03	City to conduct more outreach through the City social media channels such as Twitter, Facebook, citywide e-blast lists, etc. for the January meeting
04	City to look at placing signage at road crossings to promote community meeting
05	AECOM Financial Team to work on requests outlined below prior to January CAP and Community meetings
06	City should ask for planning effort funds from Caltrain
07	AECOM Team to update the PowerPoint using the suggestions summarized below
08	AECOM Team to revise pros and cons per the direction summarized below
09	Post Menlo Park Mayor letter
10	Send update to CAP and post on website regarding Council start time on December 17 th

Agenda

The Meeting agenda included:

- Welcome and Introductions
- Community Conversations
 - CAP Community Interactions
 - Special Presentation from CAP Member Dave Shen
 - Special Presentation from CAP Member Megan Kanne
- Debrief Community Meeting
 - Engineering Content/Video
 - Financial Content
 - Questions /Themes
 - Evaluation Matrix Feedback
- Follow-up Questions and Answers about Charleston/Meadow ideas
 - Trench Pros and Cons
 - Hybrid Pros and Cons
 - Viaduct Pros and Cons
- Work Plan

- Land Use-Downtown Draft Area Plan Effort
- Summary of Action Items/Next Meeting—January 9, 2019 4pm-6pm
- Adjourn

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

Next CAP Meeting

Next scheduled is January 9, 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	
None noted.	
Community Conversations	
CAP Member Dave Shen presented a case for a rebuild of Embarcadero crossing. He presented slides showing community created options for Embarcadero and requested that it be added to the Work Plan.	The City thanked him and others for their work. The City responded that the current traffic studies will inform the group on the impacts of various options for Churchill that might require a mitigation that would potentially involve Embarcadero. This could trigger an entirely new project that the City would need to develop and program for delivery. This topic will be added to January CAP Agenda. (01)
CAP Member Megan Kanne presented slides that highlighted community concerns related to traffic studies and a community desire for raw data, test closures and a variety of community topics.	The City responded that the test closures would be very disruptive and would be mis-leading as the City would never close a crossing without doing mitigations elsewhere, so they will not be pursuing test closures. Traffic information will be part of the January CAP agenda.
Other CAP Member reports are summarized below:	
There is a desire to consider adding “no build” to the matrix and comparison discussions. (02)	
There should be economic impacts calculated for all options.	
Request for City to conduct more outreach through the City social media channels such as Twitter, Facebook, citywide e-blast mailing lists, etc. for the January meeting. (03)	
Desire for City to place signage at road crossings to promote community meetings. (04)	
Downtown property owners will see “red” related to closure of Palo Alto Avenue.	

Comment/Questions

Responses

Presentation made in Palo Alto Hills neighborhood.

Safety related to the options is a concern.

Feedback from the community regarding concerns about the size and impacts of soundwalls on the hybrid and viaduct options.

The timing of grade separation outreach is at the same time many parents are worried about school impacts related to the GUP.

Debrief Community Meeting

AECOM team should be able to present the financial/funding issues happening in the other communities related to employee and head taxes. The community wants to know what year the tax was passed, how much, what mechanism, by what percentage of the vote, etc. (05)

Team should make it clear TIFIA is a loan that would need to be repaid.

We need to be cautious about business taxes. Our downtown businesses have not been attending the meetings and they will not be happy.

Mountain View got planning funding from Caltrain to fund their work. The City should ask for planning effort funds from Caltrain. (06)

Public Comment: related to other Cities' funding efforts.

Various comments related to the Community Meeting PowerPoint were offered:

- better portrayal of the soundwalls and catenary
- low traffic volumes in the video
- desire to dust off Josh Mello graphics related to no build traffic impacts rather than the existing bad behavior videos of the tracks
- separate out the Caltrain design exceptions from pros and cons
- articulate impacts to "corner house" better
- articulate benefits better and safety of grade separations
- make the views from the neighborhoods and from the train into the yards more obviously available at the community meeting
- update the matrix to define noise from commuter train separate from noise from freight train. (07)

Meadow/Charleston Ideas—Brainstorming of Pros and Cons

There were many specific edits offered on individual slides and those were captured by the Project Team. The following comments were general advice and requests given by the CAP and public in attendance. (07) (08)

Overall Comments related to all pros and cons:

- Overall suggestion to separate out resident points of view regarding the pros and cons versus technical engineering pros and cons.
- Include travel delay costs and impact delay costs for all options.
- Include safety measurement for each.

Comment/Questions

Responses

- Relative impacts related to shooflies.
- Noise for all.
- Impact on real estate value or maybe it really is a wash.
- Bike/ped safety.
- Costs of maintenance of new infrastructure.
- Separate out engineering set up slides related to Caltrain design exceptions.

Trench:

- A pro to add might be that it could have some sort of cover in the future that might be a bike/ped crossing.
- A con is residential flood risk increased, pump noise and maintenance.

Hybrid:

- A pro is residential flood risk same as today,
- Opportunity for mature landscaping is a pro.

Viaduct:

- A pro is residential flood risk same as today,
- Opportunity for future crossings underneath.
- Opportunities for use as trail, and for mature landscaping.
- Acknowledgement there may be costs involved with getting new buffer land under City control. If not under City control, will Caltrain take good care of that land?

Work Plan

Concern about how this effort will dovetail into Caltrain Business Plan schedule and other planning efforts. Observation there may be a need for passing tracks to be incorporated into all the design options. Good point.

Downtown Draft Area Plan Effort

This is a great idea and the only way to get to a great place in downtown.

Excellent idea, the station will need a lot of love and consideration. California Ave should be considered. Concern regarding financial challenges and wording of Measure B write up in memo. The late 2019 start date is a problem.

The freight and passenger service should be looked at separately.

What is the CAP schedule?

Decisions need to be made in February/March timeframe.

Good timing with the GUP effort and Stanford involvement

Yes, GUP timing is good and yes very relevant to all of the downtown planning. Stanford needs to be engaged.



Comment/Questions

Responses

Safety issues need to be considered. CAP Member will be coordinating with Cindy Chavez at her request on fencing, cameras, and data collection.

This coordination plan is a good idea.

Is there a letter from Menlo Park? Can we get a copy?

The letter was from Menlo Park's Mayor to the Palo Alto's Mayor. We can post it. **(09)**

Public Comments: How does downtown north go to Council?

Neighborhoods in the north should be notified as this is a big deal. Do not do this effort on the cheap. It is too important.

It is in the staff report for Monday. The Council would be able to take action and give direction. If the Council decides to go in this direction, then community outreach would begin.

In full support of this downtown planning effort. Strongly encourage the City to de-couple some of this planning since we want to move forward with studying the options Dave Shen presented at the beginning of the meeting. We do not want to lose two years before we start the planning process for the crossings.

Comment noted.

Coordinated Downtown Plan is the way to go. What is the definition of the downtown area?

Downtown has not been defined yet.

Embarcadero and University are entrances to Stanford, so that should engage them.

Good point.

Green Meadow representative expressed shock and concern about the start time of no earlier than 9:30 pm for Council discussion. It looks like Council does not want input from the community in the south part of the City.

We will re-look at agenda timing and notice the CAP if the agenda changes. **(10)**
