

Community Meeting Summary

Palo Alto Rail Program Management Services

City of Palo Alto

November 28, 2018

Prepared for:

City of Palo Alto Contract No. 18171057

Prepared by:

Eileen Goodwin, Principal
Apex Strategies
M: (408) 309-1426
E: apexstr@pacbell.net

AECOM
300 Lakeside Drive
Suite 400
Oakland
CA 94612
aecom.com

Prepared in association with:



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1. Meeting Summary

The City of Palo Alto hosted a community meeting on Wednesday November 28, 2018 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. to discuss the Connecting Palo Alto Project. The meeting was held at the Mitchell Park Community Center, El Palo Alto Room, 3700 Middlefield Road in Palo Alto. (See **Appendix A** for Meeting Notice.) Approximately 150 community members attended the meeting. (See **Appendix B** for Sign-In Sheets.) This was the second community meeting regarding this planning effort with this Project Team.

The City has convened a Community Advisory Panel (CAP) to help advise the Project Team and City staff regarding the effort. CAP members Phil Burton, Tony Carrasco, Christine Logan, Nadia Naik, and David Shen were introduced at the meeting and identified with special nametags.

Approximately forty percent (40%) of the meeting attendees indicated they received the mailed postcard announcement. Twenty percent (20%) of the meeting attendees indicated they saw a posting of the meeting notice on NextDoor. Sixty percent (60%) received the e-blast to the email list. Approximately twenty percent (20%) indicated they heard about the meeting through a CAP member. One-third of the attendees said they saw the meeting details on the Palo Alto on-line website. Other ways community members found out about this meeting included postings on several homeowner group sites as well as word of mouth or through social media. Approximately eighty percent (80%) indicated they attended the August 2018 Community Meeting. Sixty percent (60%) of attendees indicated they had attended a previous meeting on the grade separation effort before 2018.

After brief introductions by Eileen Goodwin (Apex Strategies, Meeting Facilitator), Rob De Geus, Deputy City Manager, welcomed everyone and provided introductory remarks. The facilitator then explained the content of the evening's presentation as well as the January community meeting topics which would include the grade separation concepts at Churchill Avenue and Palo Alto Avenue as well as the Citywide Tunnel concept. The facilitator stressed that the November Meeting would focus tonight on Charleston Road and Meadow Drive grade separation ideas, 3-D videos showing the proposed options and an introduction to financing and funding concepts.

After some additional topics were covered by the facilitator, Ety Mercurio, AECOM Project Manager, spoke to a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation was given to orient the attendees to the purpose of the project, project objectives, constraints that informed the project ideas, and the proposed ideas for separating the railroad tracks and the local streets at Meadow Drive and Charleston Road. Immediately following the engineering presentation Paul Peninger, AECOM, spoke to some slides that outlined potential options for funding or financing any improvements. The presentation was wrapped up by Rob De Geus, Deputy City Manager, who reminded the audience that the City has many priorities in addition to helping to construct potential grade separations. The PowerPoint was intended to be high level overview of information for the proposed ideas listed in **Figure 1**.

Ideas to Review – Finding Solutions



Meadow / Charleston Trench

- Lower the railroad below the roadways at Meadow and Charleston



Meadow / Charleston Hybrid

- Partially lower the roads and partially elevate the tracks at Meadow and Charleston



Meadow / Charleston Viaduct

- Raise the railroad above the roadways at Meadow and Charleston on structure

Figure 1. Ideas to Review

The PowerPoint Presentation and the Exhibit Boards used at the stations can be accessed through the Connecting Palo Alto website at www.cityofpaloalto.org/connectingpaloalto under the Community Outreach tab. The meeting was videotaped and the video can be accessed through a link to MidPen Media Center who taped the meeting here: <http://midpenmedia.org/city-council-152-082318/>.

There was a half hour question and answer period immediately following the PowerPoint presentation. The themes of the comments and questions asked by the public are captured in **Section 2** below.

After the question and answer session, attendees were asked to meet with City staff and the Project Team at stations around the room to get their more detailed questions answered. The stations included:

- Other Crossings (other ideas, screening process, update on tunnel, City staff questions, etc.)
- Meadow/Charleston Hybrid
- Meadow/Charleston Viaduct
- Meadow/Charleston Trench
- Creeks and Drainage
- Noise and Vibration
- Financing and Funding
- Traffic
- Evaluation Matrix

After forty-five minutes of station time, the facilitator gathered the attendees back to their seats to hear a report out from the Station Leads. The report summaries from each station are included in **Section 4**. In addition, other comments received on comment cards or at the station, but not noted in the station report out, are included in **Section 3**.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.

2. Question and Answer Session

Questions asked during the Q&A Session are summarized below :

- Desire for more details about soundwalls/noisewalls
- Request for story poles and various visuals showing impacts of proposed alternatives from the street level in various neighborhoods and back further to El Camino Real
- Interest in the Team to look at an option with Caltrain in a tunnel and freight on the surface
- Desire to have more certainty about what would happen with the 60' buffer created by viaduct option
- Consider a trench option with similar alignment to the viaduct
- Provide more detailed information about cost estimate methodology
- Concern expressed about Mello-Roos district
- Questions about viaduct design criteria and need to carry freight
- Request for more information about ground anchor easements and restrictions
- Consider aesthetic options for the viaduct design
- Questions about construction staging especially impacts to Alma Street

3. Other Comments

Comment card or comment station topics noted, but not discussed in the general session are summarized below.

- Questions about pump stations
- Desire for all the costs to be presented before we look at funding options
- Would like tunnel option to include opportunity for development on top of it
- Request for visualizations from neighborhoods
- Want to make sure the animator knows that many of the houses are capped at 13 feet high because of a historic district, not the maximum 17 feet allowed by code, so the visuals should consider that
- Questions about ownership of facilities that get constructed
- Request for a measurement of the distance between the viaduct and the houses on the other side of Alma
- Several people indicated they like the new 60-foot space created with the viaduct
- Desire expressed that 60-foot space be used for bike and pedestrian trail and maybe food truck parking and other mini events
- Desire for property owners to have a win-win so perhaps part of the 60-foot space could be given to those properties
- Concern about noise
- Desire to better understand what other cities are doing

- Would like the matrix to address the length of time of value of the finished product compared to the time to construct it

4. Station Report Outs

Station Leads reported out on comments and questions received at their stations.

Other Crossings

- Appreciated the detail in the 3D animations
- Want to see costs for the tunnel in January and comparisons to recently built tunnels in SF and San Jose's estimate for BART
- Wanted status of the other alternatives
- Questions about City screening process and decision making
- Status of Churchill Avenue

Meadow/Charleston Hybrid

- Would like to see the undercrossings incorporate a protected bike lane
- Desire for project to create better bike/ped access than today
- Alma needs additional bike improvements today
- Concerns expressed about construction impacts

Meadow/Charleston Viaduct

- Lots of questions about height in various locations, need for visuals
- Desire for some more attractive structure options
- Questions about the 60-foot buffer that would be developed and what would happen on land

Meadow/Charleston Trench

- Desire for the trench to be covered over for a desired land use
- Would like to see the trench moved closer to Alma like the viaduct option

Creeks and Drainage

- Need to make sure the trench option has systems that will not cause flooding especially to adjacent homes
- Questions regarding potential locations of pump station
- Concerns expressed about high maintenance costs
- Concerns about potential for environmental approval and whether the creek crossings were viable

Noise and Vibration

- Opinions expressed that the short noise walls for blocking wheel noise whether from electric or diesel trains would be helpful
- Desire for elimination of horn noise

- Concern about potential for reflective noise from solid soundwall added on top of one side of berm that might then reflect across Alma

Financing and Funding

- Advice given that the Team is too conservative in handicapping vote for taxing the employers/employees
- Desire for more detail on cost estimates
- Interest in value capture and development opportunities expressed
- Suggestions that Team should look at regional opportunities for funding. For example, if all the Caltrain cities agreed to a funding mechanism for funding grade separations along the corridor

Traffic

- Want to see all options and all traffic counts consider all modes (bike, ped and vehicles)
- Suggest for two additional places for traffic counts as Lincoln and Emerson
- Interest in Origin and Destination (O-D) patterns

Evaluation Matrix

- Support for advice previously received from the CAP
- Would like more differentiation, particularly regarding rating the noise impacts
- Want more construction cost details
- Feel that the pros and cons in the PowerPoint do not yet translate to the matrix categories

Appendix A – Meeting Notice



CITY OF
**PALO
ALTO**

Office of Transportation
250 Hamilton Ave, 5th floor
Palo Alto, CA 94303

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Community Advisory Panel

Name	Neighborhood
Mandar Borkar	Ventura
Gregory Brail	Duveneck/St. Francis
Phil Burton	St. Clair Gardens
Tony Carrasco	Palo Alto Orchards
Inyoung Cho	Southgate
Megan Kanne	University South
Pat Lau	Fairmeadow
Christine Logan	Greenmeadow
Nadia Naik	Old Palo Alto
Parag Patkar	Charleston Meadow
David Shen	Old Palo Alto
Kari Hodgson	Fairmeadow

For more information visit:
cityofpaloalto.org/ConnectingPaloAlto
then click on the **CAP** tab



Connecting Palo Alto

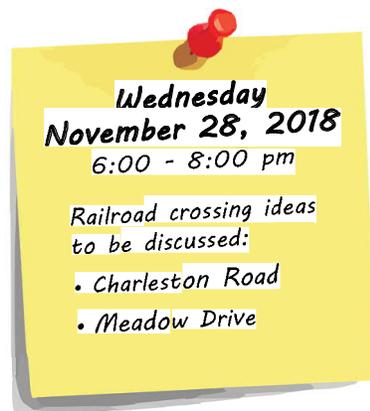
Help Design the Future of Palo Alto's Rail Corridor

Community Meeting Notification

Join us at our upcoming community meetings where we will discuss separating the street from the railroad at the four existing railroad crossings: **Churchill Avenue, Charleston Road, Meadow Drive, and Palo Alto Avenue.** Ideas will be evaluated with the following criteria being considered:

- Improve East-West connectivity
- Reduce traffic congestion and delays
- Provide clear and safe routes for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Support continued rail operations
- Finance with feasible funding sources
- Minimize right-of-way acquisition
- Reduce rail noise and vibration
- Maintain or improve local access
- Minimize visual changes along the corridor
- Minimize disruption and the duration of construction

Provide your feedback during the next two community meetings at the Mitchell Park Community Center, El Palo Alto Room, 3700 Middlefield Road.



For more information visit:
cityofpaloalto.org/ConnectingPaloAlto

Contact the City at:
650-329-2520

Send questions or feedback to:
transportation@cityofpaloalto.org

Appendix B – Sign-In Sheets

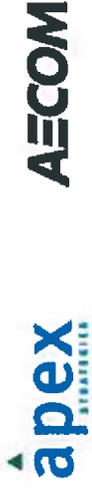


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Sign-In Sheet

	Name and Affiliation (If Applicable)	Address	City, Zip	E-mail
1	<i>MS</i>			
2	<i>Penny Ellson</i>			
3	<i>Mandar Boykar</i>			
4	<i>Maija McDonald</i>			
5	<i>John Kokentis</i>			
6	<i>Robert Chaffard</i>			
7	<i>Kent Kohler</i>			
8	<i>Jim Silver</i>			
9	<i>Bob Moss</i>			
10	<i>Rob Willoner</i>			



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	Name and Affiliation (If Applicable)	Address	City, Zip	E-mail
11, 12	Tom & Rachel Kellerman			
13	Francis Viggiano			
14	Mike Pichulo			
15	ELLEN HARTOG			
16	KEN STREIB			
17	Carolyn Ockers			
18	Bob Skow			
19	Mary Anne Dier			
20	Laura Bjork			
21	PATRICIA LAU			
22	Lynn Chiopella			



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	Name and Affiliation (If Applicable)	Address	City, Zip	E-mail
23	Mitchell Rosen			
24	Blake Putnam			
25	Tommy Cantor			
26	Stephan Hermeton			
27	Norman Adams			
28	PAULA RUGG			
29	Mark C. Lawry			
30	LYNNE RUSSELL			
31	Elizabeth Greenfield			
32	Shannon McEntee			
33	DAVID SHEN			



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	Name and Affiliation (If Applicable)	Address	City, Zip	E-mail
34	Richard Purkey			
35	David Elg			
36	TZE KUN SOH			
37	POT BANAL			
38	John Kishini			
39	Amin Melwan			
40	Susan Osafay			
41	Rosie Mestecharu			
42	Don Russell			
43	Sally Bemus			
44	Jeanne K. Day			

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	Name and Affiliation (If Applicable)	Address	City, Zip	E-mail
45	Israel Lerman			
46	Jocelyn Dammann			
47	Cedric Hughes			
48	Stau Jefferson			
49	Devon Cohn			
50	Valerie Stinson			
51	Tim Perkins			
52	Ellen Wunder			
53	Stephen Fesabik			
54	Cedric de La B			
55	Barbara Villalons			

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	Name and Affiliation (If Applicable)	Address	City, Zip	E-mail
56	JOSH Cals			
57	John Carr			
58	Martin Liberman			
59	MARY LAUTNER			
60	Brian E. Larkin			
61	Susan Suggs			
62	KHURSHID GANDHI			
63	Ginny LaRue			
64	DAVID FLEZZ			
65	Hung-Lune Cheng			
66	JACOB VALES			



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	Name and Affiliation (If Applicable)	Address	City, Zip	E-mail
67	Doug Boyle			
68	Carol Turner			
69	Susie Robbins			
70	Allen Maryka Wood			
71	Judy Creek			



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	Name and Affiliation (If Applicable)	Address	City, Zip	E-mail
72	Wendy Akers - Ghose			
73	Howard Chen			
74	Maren W. Moulton			
75	Tony Roberts			
76	Jerry Smith			
77	Lucinda Brommergren			
78	Shirley Hamer			
79	Barbara Hartzell			
80	Robert Neff			
81	Robert Neff			
82	GARY FORMATA			



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Sign-In Sheet

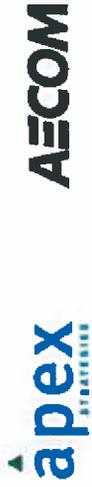
	Name and Affiliation (If Applicable)	Address	City, Zip	E-mail
83	Chris Logan			
84	Lindsay Joye			
85	Annie Noff			
86	Mali Lev-Ram			
87	G BELL			
88	Carl Oltrop			
89	Kuneha Sih			
90	Hugh MacMillan			
91	Roger Petersen			
92	Bob Moss			
93	David Paul Collins			

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Sign-In Sheet

	Name and Affiliation (If Applicable)	Address	City, Zip	E-mail
94	BARBARA SCARBOROUGH			
95	Chris Mellin			
96	WARREN OLMSTED			
97	Masako Kamazawa			
98	JEFF HOEL			
99	Hwi Lu			
100	Jerry Underdahl			
101	Anthony Ascioitta			
102	Ken Joyle			
103	Edgar Ugarte			
104	Reid Kleckner			



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	Name and Affiliation (If Applicable)	Address	City, Zip	E-mail
105	Tom Marshburn			
106	Frank Rothrock			
107	Doug Orr			
108	Robert Ohlmann			
109	Sam Miki			
110	Peter Struff			
111	Lee Longhammi			
112	Judith Wassen			
113	Kathy Joki			
114	GARY MATHANY			
115	Alison Cormack			



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Sign-In Sheet

	Name and Affiliation (If Applicable)	Address	City, Zip	E-mail
116	Phil Swartz			
117	RICK RARDEN			
118	MARTHA ROSTON			
119	Patrick Muggler			
120	NGOC NGAI			
121	Ed Baranowich			
122	BRIAN KILGORE			
123	MAURIZIO GIANOLA			
124	DIRK MAEDER			
125	ARI CARTUN			
126	GARY LINDBER			

