

October 22, 2019

Palo Alto Police Department

XCAP Memo

It is important to note that the Police Department's responses to emergency calls can differ significantly from those in the Fire Department. Police officers are routinely patrolling the city, and can begin their response to a call from anywhere in town (e.g. not from a fixed location, such as a fire station). Also, the target of a police response is not always at a static location as is common with a Fire Department call; rather, suspects routinely flee from crime scenes, and the police response must take that into account as officers make changes in the path of their response to intercept them. Flexibility and options are key to a police response.

While the closure of the Churchill crossing would prevent officers from driving directly across the tracks as we do now, the proposed traffic mitigations and use of signal preemption technology would offset the potential impacts. Suspects in vehicles would also be impacted just the same as police vehicles; a closure would actually reduce an avenue of vehicular escape from a nearby crime scene. With the viaduct option, the elimination of the grade crossing would have a positive impact on police responses; without having to wait for a train to cross, east/west access would be improved, but the same could be said for suspects in vehicles as well.

The Police Department recognizes the local and regional importance of this project, and will be able to successfully adapt their responses to whichever option is ultimately selected.