

To: City Council

From: Nadia Naik, Chair of Expanded Community Advisory Panel (XCAP)

Date: May 18, 2020

Re: Update #5 to City Council

The last in-person update to City Council was on 1/21/20 and the update on 3/16/2020 was turned into a written informational report due to COVID19.

Before COVID19:

Prior to COVID19, XCAP had an aggressive schedule, meeting weekly for three hours at a time. XCAP had begun the process of deliberating on existing alternatives while awaiting the updated analysis for the three new alternatives (Churchill partial underpass, Meadow underpass and Charleston underpass). A significant development that was omitted in the last update is that on an interim basis, XCAP voted unanimously to eliminate from further consideration the two South Palo Alto tunnel options (with and without freight) from our internal deliberations. Between roughly 2/12/20 – 3/18/20, the XCAP received 40+ emails related to the alternatives, with many indicating they would be interested in attending XCAP’s meetings.

AFTER COVID19:

Unfortunately, due to COVID, seven meetings between March 4th and April 15th were cancelled due to shelter-in-place orders from Santa Clara County.

During the Shelter-In-Place order, however, the XCAP Technical Working Group (a subset of 4 XCAP members) met on 3/19/20 by virtual meeting to review work completed to date by AECOM on the Churchill partial underpass.

The first Virtual XCAP meeting was held via Zoom on 4/22/20 where we completed the following tasks:

- Discussed the short-term impacts of COVID19 to the schedule
- AECOM presented initial analysis of the Churchill partial underpass, as well as a newly completed animation video
- XCAP revised the outline for the Final Report to include “XCAP Observations” specific to each alternative regardless of final recommendation
- Received staff responses regarding measurable Criteria
- Received staff responses to outstanding XCAP Questions List
- Was provided oral notice of Caltrain emails regarding 4-tracks

XCAP Team Update:

XCAP member Megan Kanne will be relocating to the East Coast and unable to continue participating after 5/31/20. In addition, the group discussed the ongoing challenges of having lengthy weekly XCAP meetings given the challenges present during COVID19. There are also several members that have expressed to the Chair the ongoing difficulties of “working on XCAP” issues while balancing work and home life during this time.

Proposed Schedule Changes and Community Engagement:

The XCAP discussed having meetings every 2 weeks and trying to shorten meetings to two hours instead of the usual three. To maximize efficiency, Staff has agreed to work to post items as quickly as possible to allow XCAP members maximum time to be able to read materials ahead of meetings. The XCAP also only approved the schedule for the next two meetings to maintain flexibility during this crisis and ensure that this new timetable and format are working well enough to be able to deliberate. There is concern that while Zoom meetings are useful during this crisis, they cannot replace the importance of in-person meetings, particularly when the goal is collaborative consensus building towards a final recommendation. However, the XCAP agreed to remain thoughtful and flexible and continue to try to use new mediums to achieve the goal.

XCAP members expressed concern about the ability to continue to both publicize and receive iterative feedback on the new alternatives. AECOM and Staff presented XCAP with some new virtual Town Hall tools that might be useful for achieving this goal. The potential of having an “extended online” Town Hall which can remain on the internet for several weeks rather than a one time in-person event offers an interesting opportunity, but it remains to be seen how much community engagement there might be on this issue given COVID19 and the difficulty of garnering attention for this topic given the current news cycle.

It should be noted that on average, in-person XCAP meetings usually have around 25 attendees, but the first virtual XCAP meeting had over 35 attendees, with several people in public comment acknowledging that this format allows them the flexibility to participate in a way they previously couldn't.

Workflow items:

Outstanding XCAP questions – Staff has provided responses to a list of questions that was finalized by XCAP on 1/29/2020. Responses will be discussed at the May 6th XCAP meeting – status TBD [note: update after XCAP meeting to reflect status]

Measurable Criteria: XCAP had asked Staff to provide any metrics or measurements from existing plans, such as the City's 2030 Comprehensive Plan, which could provide the basis for quantitative measurements directly related to the Council adopted criteria (eg.: noise decibels). Limited information was available in response to the request. Some of the data collected was for specific projects at a certain point in time. Other information was not applicable to the task

of rail grade separation. The limited information available will be included in the appendices of XCAP's Final Report.

Noise and Vibration Information: XCAP has been advised by Staff and consultants that specific information related to noise and vibration is likely unavailable at this early juncture. In that absence, there are established broad standards that may be useful in highlighting differences between, for example, the noise impacts of a hybrid vs. a viaduct. XCAP has also asked for the "menu of mitigation alternatives" which would essentially list potential mitigation types and how they could be applied against the alternatives to further mitigate known impacts. **Update: AECOM will be presenting to XCAP a noise (vibration?) memo at an upcoming May meeting.**

New Alternatives additional information:

The XCAP continues to receive information from AECOM for the new alternatives with the ultimate goal to have the same level of analysis for all alternatives so that XCAP can make their ultimate recommendation.

Business Community Outreach:

Before COVID19, the XCAP member representing the Chamber of Commerce resigned. The Chair and Vice Chair were informed that Staff are working on other outreach to the business community. To date, XCAP has not received any feedback from the business community on either existing or new alternatives.

PAUSD Outreach:

The Staff is the point of contact for PAUSD since the departure of their representative from XCAP. On 2/26/20 XCAP received from PAUSD a letter from the Superintendent regarding impacts from existing alternatives (Churchill viaduct and closure). The district communicated concerns indicating that a closure of Churchill "may negatively impact student safety related to bicycle commuters." It is important to note that the Churchill Closure alternative developed by AECOM has two different bike/ped underpass alternatives that would allow for continued bike/ped crossing in the Churchill area.

XCAP assumes that Staff will continue to communicate with PAUSD to ensure it fully understands both the existing and new alternatives and encourage them to provide additional feedback before XCAP finalizes deliberations.

Website:

The Staff report acknowledged they're behind on updating the website, though the meeting videos are now all available on the project website.

Staff, the Chair and Vice Chair are working to ensure the following items are uploaded:

1. Meeting minutes – A summary of actions taken in the XCAP meeting summarizing formal votes

2. Meeting Summary – Summary of what transpired during the meeting such that members of the public can quickly read a synopsis of each meeting
3. Transcription of key meetings – It was agreed that a full transcription of two key meetings (presentation by Sebastian Petty of Caltrain and Norm Matteoni (attorney) from Matteoni, O'Laughlin & Hechtman) would be produced for the website and for inclusion in the appendix of the XCAP Final Report
4. Compilations of Public Comment – An email was developed for XCAP such that members of the public could email a single address with comments. Previously, emails received at this address were being made public in City Council packets. It was agreed that going forward, public comments will be included as part of the XCAP's packet (similar to how City Council receives emails) such that XCAP members have a succinct record of emails received and that the public both easily see the emails they've sent to XCAP and read emails received by XCAP from other members of the public.

Future Schedule and Work Plan:

XCAP approved that the Chair would assign sections of XCAP's Final Report to various group members to begin production of a final deliverable for the City Council. An outline of the report and the assigned sections can be viewed here: <https://connectingpaloalto.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Shared-at-Meeting-Item-4-Memo-re-XCAP-deliberation-Feb-202020.pdf>

The effects of COVID19 have impacted the group's ability to work on these sections. Some sections have made progress, others have not. The Chair will continue to engage with XCAP members regarding their ability to work on these sections given their personal situations. It is important to note that 9 of the 12 current XCAP members were originally Community Advisory Panel members, and thus have been volunteering on this issue for almost 2 years. This level of commitment reflects the incentive to see this final report to fruition, but we want to recognize the unprecedented burden that many are faced with throughout this crisis.

Summary

XCAP will continue to work towards the goal of deliberating over the Spring and into Summer while we continue to evaluate the schedule based on the ability of XCAP members and the community to participate in a meaningful way during this difficult time. Our estimated completion date is August 31st.