

# **Expanded Community Advisory Panel (XCAP)**

**February 12, 2020**

Special Meeting - Summary

Community Meeting Room

## **1. Welcome and Roll Call**

Present: Phil Burton, Tony Carrasco, Inyoung Cho, Megan Kanne, Nadia Naik, Keith Reckdahl, David Shen, Cari Templeton

Absent: Gregory Brail, Larry Klein, Patricia Lau, Adina Levin,

## **2. Oral Communications**

Chair Naik announced that item number four would be moved up to after oral communications.

Kathy Jordan stated she and her neighbors who are adjacent to Embarcadero Road do not want to see Churchill or Palo Alto Avenue closed. The 9800 vehicles that cross Churchill Avenue most likely are trying to cross town because that is a vital artery through town. If Churchill is closed, they most likely will not be jumping on Caltrain to get across town. They will be doing to Embarcadero Road or Oregon Expressway. Similarly, with Palo Alto Avenue, she expected most of that traffic would be trying to get across town and would be diverted to Embarcadero Road. Those who live there don't appreciate the prospect of having over 10,000 vehicles potentially being added to the traffic congestion already there. In two of the last three years Caltrain's ridership has dropped. The projections of carrying more passengers, doubling the ridership in 20 years are based on many things that may not occur.

Female speaker asked if the Eminent Domain attorney spoke about consequences if quality of life is diminished even if property was not taken?

Chair Naik replied that he did and it was suggested the speaker go back and watch the video on the Midpen Media site.

## **3. Action: Follow Up Discussion with Hexagon Consulting Regarding Traffic Study**

Gary Black explained there was a handout with the questions Ms. Cotton Gaines summarized and answer from Hexagon are under each question. There is nothing in the power point that isn't in the handout. Each question and answer were gone over. Question 1. Mr. Black noted there were many questions regarding how to maintain access. There is an actual conceptual drawing in the handout which showed driveways. The curved line stayed exactly the way it is now and the driveways would have the same access they have now.

XCAP Member Shen asked if there would be a risk of that right-turn lane ever filling up. Will it empty out effectively because there is no light onto Embarcadero, potentially blocking those driveways?

Mr. Black answered there would be times when there would be cars waiting at the stop sign. They did a simulation of this and it's not a standing queue so there wouldn't be a constant line of cars all the time. Mr. Black continued with question 2 and explained there isn't enough room to have two-way cycle tracks on both sides without taking a right-of-way.

XCAP Member Kanne remarked the concern was that unless you add a crosswalk the people using that bike and pedestrian underpass on both sides currently don't switch to the correct side of the road so only people going in the direction of car traffic are using that track.

Mr. Black advised he was not prepared to discuss what ifs. He was just saying they wouldn't fit within the existing right-of-way. They could design something if that was asked for by XCAP. Question 3 applied to the light at Kingsley and there were no comments about that. Question 4 asked about adding a right-turn lane at Embarcadero and he noted there was a diagram for this. Regarding the right-turn lane, he believed the concept was to have a cycle track on both sides of Embarcadero. If there was a cycle track it would be to the right of all the cars but if there was a right-turn lane there, the cycle track would have to be transitioned out into the street between the through lanes and the right-turn lane. It would be possible to do it, but it would be a trade off with the double left.

XCAP Member Kanne questioned if the left was a high volume turn and that's the reason for the double left turn lanes?

Mr. Black answered it was about the same volume as the right turn currently, but the design was anticipating Churchill being closed which would add traffic to the left turn.

Chair Naik asked assuming Churchill was closed, would there be more people on El Camino going south trying to make a left turn onto Embarcadero and could a second left-turn lane be added. Previously discussed was that cars stack up to make the left turn, but there was also an ability to make a left turn into Town and Country and there is a conflict that happens in that zone. Will that get worse when more people are turning onto Embarcadero.

Mr. Black commented that El Camino is wide enough to put another lane in.

Chair Naik noted that was not deemed necessary as part of the mitigation of a closure.

Mr. Black responded that they didn't, but there were a lot of ways to look at El Camino and Embarcadero, add a second left, add a second left on El Camino, add a right turn going from Embarcadero to El Camino. Any of those improvements would probably help offset the added traffic from the Churchill closure.

Chair Naik related what she heard was if a Churchill closure was adopted, then a deep study of the actual improvements would be needed.

Mr. Black agreed absolutely. Moving on to question 5, he referenced the concept diagrams and illustrated this.

Chair Naik clarified if you had three or four cars stopped at that light in the far southbound lane, you would be impeding those that would be a constant stop and go down to the Cal Ave area.

XCAP Member Kanne noted this was her question and she pointed to it on the diagram.

Mr. Black responded that wouldn't be controlled by the light, but yes, if there were a few cars backed up at that signal, it would temporarily block that ramp until the light turned green, but that was not shown to be a big problem in the analysis. Regarding question 6, Hexagon focused on the peak hours when the combination of trains and cars is the highest. During the off-peak hours, the car count isn't that high. If things work during the car peak which is also the Caltrain peak, then it will definitely work during the off peak, even if there are more Caltrain trains

Chair Naik confirmed Hexagon used twelve trains per hour, not sixteen.

Mr. Black continued with question 7 expanded the answer that Churchill ends before getting to Middlefield and Hexagon assigned that traffic to use Waverly where there is a signal, using Waverly to get to Embarcadero. The Waverly and Embarcadero intersection isn't bad so there wouldn't be an impact at that location. Moving to question 8, Hexagon had to try to get at what the question was trying to address. The idea was that if it was easier to use Churchill, then maybe more traffic would use Churchill. It would be expected there would be a little more traffic on Churchill, not too much within the neighborhood because it appeared that the traffic coming out of the neighborhood wasn't much when compared to the amount of traffic that was using the part of Churchill between Alma and El Camino. With the viaduct the signal would still be there and with the viaduct the operation of that intersection was still not wonderful. There is still a lot of traffic on Alma and making turns onto Churchill and that needed to be accommodated.

XCAP Member Reckdahl thought a concern the neighbors had was one reason people don't take Churchill right now and might go down Embarcadero because they don't want the prospect of having to stop for the train. If that issue isn't there anymore, there may be more inducement to go to Churchill which may then get even more traffic than currently. Is it possible to calculate how much increased traffic there would be? If there was increased traffic, what would the mitigations be?

Mr. Black replied Hexagon and do a deeper dive regarding traffic numbers. He believed the traffic wouldn't be a lot more because the operation of the intersection isn't going to be much better than currently. In terms of what to do to discourage the traffic from using Churchill, he thought the City was separately pursuing some "traffic calming" potential improvements on Churchill that would slow the traffic down to discourage drivers to use that street.

Chair Naik perceived a difference between the increase of cars between El Camino and Alma and more people turning now onto Alma because that is more efficient, not significantly more efficient, but not having a train makes it much more significant than currently. There is also a difference between the cut-through of those who might now choose to go further into Old Palo Alto, something they don't do now.

XCAP Member Shen voiced what concerned him is what was said about a little bit more induced traffic, except already during those times there are cars backed up from about Alma to El Camino. It is similar on the other side, depending on the time of day. A few more cars on that short street would mean it would be fuller. Could the traffic lights be manipulated to empty that out as much as possible?

Mr. Black advised the discussion right now is traffic volume and not queueing. Without the train interruption, you would see the queueing lessen. A lot of the reason for the queueing is the train interruptions, Churchill can't go when a train comes and Alma get a green. If the train is gone, that intersection could operate in a more balanced fashion. The queue length and the volume are two different things. He didn't think the queue would get longer if the train interruptions were gone. The queue length graphics were on the fact sheets for the Churchill but it didn't show the queue length with the viaduct with the trains gone. That can be done.

XCAP Member Carrasco asked if the Q1 graphic was an upgraded version of the last alternative?

Mr. Black responded that it wasn't necessarily upgraded. It was different, mostly done in response to the driveway access. Returning to question 8 with Mike Price's idea you can't go across on Churchill so there would probably be increased volume on Churchill between El Camino and Alma. The volume on the residential part of Churchill would be reduced because you couldn't go straight or turn left. The volume on the part of Churchill at El Camino would be increased.

Chair Naik inquired if the now diverted traffic on Embarcadero require mitigations on Embarcadero given the number seen in the traffic study?

Mr. Black replied with Mike Price's idea there would be some diversion, not as much as with closure. You could make a right turn out of there, but you couldn't go across but not many cars go across. It is in the scope of work to study that diversion. There probably wouldn't be induced traffic onto Churchill. Addressing question 9, this template was put on a slightly different version of question 1 design. It is evolving based on the Group's questions. The graphic shows a typical truck making the turn. It has to be designed so a truck or emergency vehicles can make the turn. Question 10 addressed the LOS of the new Kingsley/Embarcadero light in 2030. Mr. Black referred to the figures on a chart answering that question. He remarked that the XCAP questions are causing Hexagon to dig deeper on some issues and come up with some revisions. When looking at the simulation with that light, the backup on Embarcadero in the PM went almost to El Camino and that probably isn't palatable. Looking at the illustration with the truck turning, that left turn lane opposes the through traffic on Embarcadero going east in the PM peak, heavy movement and there is only one lane for that movement. In the new version, the left turn is gone, so to turn left you need to use the Embarcadero slip ramp and there would be another signal at Alma.

XCAP Member Shen asked if that could be alleviated in 2030 by adding another lane under Alma?

Mr. Black responded yes it would. That wasn't pursued that at this point because that is a major deal, replacing a bridge. He noted he didn't understand question 11.

XCAP Member Kanne explained that was to try to use things like the delay numbers given to measure the different options such as getting from different points and the time it takes as a pedestrian.

Mr. Black advised they could better mark out the pedestrian paths that would be involved if the pedestrian movements could be defined. The pedestrian paths could be drawn onto any diagram and then calculate as a pedestrian how long it would take to walk. One question could be how long it would take to cross Alma because in order to use the pedestrian bridge you first have to get across Alma.

XCAP Member Kanne explained the criteria says "provide clear, safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists crossing the rail corridor separate from vehicles".

Mr. Black related that was a design goal, design a path to do that, separate it from vehicles to the extent possible. Hexagon can provide some input to better define that.

XCAP Member Carrasco thought Hexagon did a very good job very quickly, but it addresses cars. Now the pedestrians and bikes need to be layered on and make that more important than cars.

Mr. Black noted all the designs have accommodated bikes and pedestrians, but they aren't highlighted on the drawings. Nothing has been designed that would preclude bikes or pedestrians or would be unsafe.

Chair Naik shared she is struggling with ultimately the Group is trying to decide do you close Churchill or build a viaduct or do Mike Price's idea. Once that is decided, for example a closure, now focus needs to be on what the mitigations are. If a closure was decided on, Hexagon would have to go back and do much more work to get to the refined things being talked about. The goal might be, when Hexagon comes back the Group would need this level of things to show to the Council that cars and bikes and pedestrians are treated equally. Ultimately, the work here needs to bound by what is necessary to be able to decide the grade separation discussion and give advice later on further refinements.

Mr. Shikada reiterated, as Chair Naik said, it is really within the context of making the grade separation choice, there are multiple ways to design wherever you want, in order to accomplish that. The question is, how far do you need to take that at this point in time to support the decision on the grade separation. The scope was to get to the \$100 million questions as opposed to the variables which are in the tens of millions to ensure the design provides sufficient clarity and functionality at the pedestrian and bicycle scale.

XCAP Member Kanne would want to know if the mitigations required for cars to reach a certain level of service preclude any routes by pedestrians and bicyclists.

Mr. Black replied they don't but they need to be illustrated to give the information looked for. Moving on to question 12, there was a table in the presentation which shows the added traffic at a number of intersections in the AM and PM peak hours with the Churchill closure compared to the existing volume and the percentage increase. The next questions were about work feasibility. Question 1 needs expansion.

XCAP Member Reckdahl explained it came down to can the psychology of humans be modeled well enough to understand that if you open something up or make it faster, how many more people will use that faster route? You can guess what it is, but you can't predict with any accuracy.

Mr. Black indicated Hexagon can give a range with fair accuracy, but within that range, no. What could be said was, if everyone drove on this road it would be X, and if no one drove on the road it would be X.

XCAP Member Reckdahl voiced in Churchill there is concern that it will become more of a madhouse than it is currently.

Mr. Black explained an example of what they could do. Right now, the delay at Churchill is whatever, say 60 seconds and if you do some improvement it will be 30 seconds. How many more cars can go on Churchill to put it back to 60 seconds, because you're not going to get more delay than there is today? You might add enough cars to get it to what it is now.

XCAP Member Burton remarked if you could do that kind of analysis, aren't you in effect diverting traffic from roads like Oregon Expressway and shouldn't that be modeled as a way of assessing the answer to that question?

Mr. Black advised if the traffic ends up Churchill and it's not on Churchill today, it came from somewhere so where it came from would need to be looked at.

XCAP Member Burton thought what is being talked about is the new equilibrium point and that has to look at the shifts in equilibrium and alternatives.

Mr. Black advised he didn't want to paint too rosy a picture of Hexagon's ability to predict things like that. He moved on to question 2 and explained the VTA model goes to 2040, but the land use in the VTA model for Palo Alto has not been vetted and approved by the City.

XCAP Member Kanne commented Caltrain's medium growth business plan in 2040 with all the supposed growth could be imagined, but it wouldn't specifically Palo Alto.

Mr. Black responded it would include whatever VTA put into the model for Palo Alto for 2040, however, Palo Alto City Staff has not approved that.

XCAP Member Burton remarked on the Future Downtown Plan which was the reason Palo Alto Avenue was detached from the current scope of the Group's work. If that was the case it's hard to imagine how the City could go beyond 2030 land use.

Mr. Shikada agreed that forecasting beyond the horizon of the general plan for land use would be speculation. What happens after the Comp Plan is built out or if Stanford or Menlo Park or Mountain View were to change its long-range projections, that is the realm the City is starting to enter into. The forecasts the City has for land use, are as far as the forecasts exists.

XCAP Member Carrasco clarified the Group is planning for 2030 but the infrastructure would last a hundred years and he asked if the Group should ask the Council if they should go out farther?

Mr. Shikada offered that the term of characterization of the future as 2030 or any other particular year is as speculative as how much growth will happen in that timeframe.

XCAP Member Burton offered the idea that the infrastructure that is put into place will influence land use.

Mr. Black advised to simplify the discussion by saying, the problems being dealt with exist today even if there is no growth at all in the future. The problems are happening currently in the corridor and the crossings and he wasn't sure if a problem will be seen in the future that doesn't already exist to a certain extent today. It will get worse in the future with growth. Question 3 asked about traffic impacts during construction. Mr. Black asked for clarification of Question 4.

Chair Naik indicated this was echoing at a very early meeting with Billy Riggs from Planning and Transportation Commission and he stated there were network maps that could be created that could explain how traffic generally flows and how putting grade separations in different places could change traffic system-wide. He also talked about multi-model LOS and there were different ways to show not just the car numbers but also bike and pedestrian numbers.

Mr. Black replied Hexagon can show the Group a network map of the motor vehicle traffic. A network map of bikes and pedestrian doesn't have counts of bikes and pedestrians. The vehicle map can show the City and all the roads and the volume on each road, how the volume could change if a grade separation was done or not.

Chair Naik remarked the conversation was around Embarcadero and El Camino and the Churchill area so just about that more bounded segment but not just the specific mitigations that would be necessary.

Mr. Black agreed if there was that kind of definition a map could be provided to show the volume going up or down in specific areas.

Chair Naik noted it may be good to know, but may not be the make or break in terms of deciding about a grade separation at Churchill.

XCAP Member Carrasco commented when the Group looked at Arastradero the Traffic Engineer modeled it with a video that showed how much traffic accumulated in specific areas and that made it easy to understand when you close something what happens somewhere else.

Mr. Black replied they have a video they prepared and could show it but it was pretty boring. The video won't change your mind. The changes aren't dramatic.

XCAP Member Burton wanted to go back to the measurable criteria and decide which are the key issues and focus most efforts on those criteria.

Chair Naik advised the criteria said “reduce delay and congestion for vehicular traffic at rail crossings” and “facilitate movement across the corridor for all modes of transportation”. There isn’t a way to measure vehicle delay and congestion.

XCAP Member Burton voice that there has to be a very productive discussion on what the criteria mean and specific questions to ask based on the criteria.

Mr. Black explained typically they assess delay based on the intersection level of service which is based on delay. All those calculations have been done. The simulation will show you what it actually looks like.

Chair Naik indicated any new grade crossing will reduce vehicular delay because there will no longer be a train interruption.

Mr. Black replied the question is about how much, looking at the cost how much time is saved. He advised if you looked at two simulations side-by-side and watched each for an hour, you would not be able to tell the delay difference between them. The next group of questions were related to work requests and how much would each cost. Regarding question 1, he advised the model is set up by they haven’t been authorized to do it. He went over Question 2 and answers. Question 3 regarding level of service. He presented a table which he thought would answer some of the questions about the differences. He did note the table didn’t have the increased train service from electrification. He clarified the ones at grade are the east side and the ones underneath the track were the west side. The F for Mike Price’s idea for 2030 in the PM was the result of trying to get it to work with one single lane northbound. Mike Price’s idea had two lanes but it would be easier to build with one lane.

Chair Naik commented Alma already narrows down to one lane at the Alma Street bridge and asked if this was assuming Mike Price’s idea but not the mitigation of widening that bridge at that spot?

Mr. Black answered yes but the problem is that doesn’t have a signal, it just narrows down to one lane. If there was a signal there and it was one lane that keeps getting stopped, that is what causes the level of service of F.

Chair Naik remarked it was the one lane at the surface that gets stopped from pedestrians. If there was a bike/ped path in a different location, that could potentially help improve that number.

Mr. Black indicated if you didn’t have pedestrians crossing there you could pull that signal. The right turns would have to wait for a gap.

Mr. Shikada reminded everyone there is very heavy pedestrian and bicycle traffic and with Mr. Black’s concept that traffic would need to cross Alma with no signal protection.

Chair Naik related you could move the bike/ped treatment to an underground tunnel, the Churchill closure where you have the road, the bikes sink down into the middle of the street, maybe that could be at Seal or Kellogg.

Mr. Shikada explained you would still need to surface on the east side of Alma. The concept that had been talked about previously was, you basically take over half of Churchill east of Alma in order to surface the bike/ped tunnel that is traveling under Alma. The same would be necessary on any other street. Visualizing the previously discussed concepts of the tunnel, it comes up in the middle of Churchill. Unlike California Avenue, you don't have a public space off of the street from which to surface an underpass.

Mr. Black noted if Mike Price's option was kept with the two lanes, then it would be about a level of service C. It would take widening of Alma to build two lanes.

Mr. Shikada remarked that Alma is already basically built out with no extra space so the assumption was taking probably both the landscaping on the east side of Alma, the parkway strip and widening into the Caltrain right-of-way, assuming they would accept that for about 800 feet.

Mr. Black clarified the simulation with the level of service F had two lanes Alma northbound, one was turning left, one going straight. That was to try to avoid the widening to two lanes. Question 4 regarding queues, he referenced the previous discussion about how to manage the queues on Embarcadero with a new light at Kingsley and explained the attached snapshots.

Chair Naik indicated the question was around the queueing of cars that were coming on Embarcadero eastbound and now making a hard right turn onto Kingsley.

Mr. Black responded part of the queue that makes it back up is right turn cars and cars going straight, because they're all in one lane. There was a question of getting cars to fit on Kingsley because it is pretty short and there wasn't much queueing on Kingsley. They tried it with only two lanes on Kingsley but that wouldn't work. Four lanes are needed on Kingsley in order to contain the queues to get the signals to work. There was a question about digging deeper on Embarcadero and Embarcadero has not been simulated. The only part of Embarcadero that was simulated was the intersection with Kingsley.

Chair Naik commented that there was no read on if Churchill was closed and you want to go south on Alma, you go east on Embarcadero, then make a right turn onto Kingsley, wait for the light and then turn left to go south.

Mr. Black replied that part was simulated.

Chair Naik stated she would be in favor of posting those videos.

Mr. Black responded those files are huge. He will look into Hexagon possibly make a video of just part of the file.

Chair Naik stated if the videos already exist and there is no additional cost, she would like to be able to have those available.

Mr. Black advised they would have to simulate Embarcadero to see how it worked with all the intersections. He now moved to question 5a.

Mr. Shikada opined that at this point it is outside the scope of the work that has been defined. It raises a series of other issues on access and potential traffic issues within that neighborhood.

Mr. Black remarked on question 5b and response is shown. Question 6, there are diagrams of bike counts. There are no bike or ped counts between Kingsley and the school entrance along Embarcadero.

Chair Naik explained the blue bicycle shows the number of bikes that crossed in the street in the bike lane of 262 and the red bike number of 128 are those who cross in the crosswalk. The total would be 262 plus 128.

Mr. Black moved to questions 7 and 8 and answers. Regarding question 9, the traffic volume changes but the traffic count needs to be correct as well. Question 10, the information could be provided.

XCAP Member Kanne noted there were several diagrams of Embarcadero. She asked which is the one with the best operation?

Mr. Black showed Q1 diagram that responded to the 2030 queueing issue to try to accommodate the 2030 volume without excessive queues. It showed a new signal at Alma and the Embarcadero ramp.

Chair Naik noted this causes bikes and peds to cross in front of those cars using that slip road to get to the underpass.

Mr. Shikada remarked this would be a topic for the City to look closer at, the geometry as well as options for traffic control to make it part of the signal that regulates the flow of the vehicles rather than a free ramp.

XCAP Member Reckdahl asked what the requirements were for turning radius. One of the challenges of the Price idea at the Churchill underpass is the width it takes at Alma.

Mr. Shikada remarked it becomes an issue of the safety of the design and the ability to reasonably foresee a large vehicle attempting to make that turn. It is the engineer's responsibility to anticipate the types and sizes of vehicles.

#### Public comment

Male speaker Jason commented the analysis that projected traffic under the Mike Price option versus the Churchill option was very important. He asked for explanation of what was measured.

Female speaker Susan thought she heard a call for possibly modeling the traffic on Embarcadero and maybe El Camino but he would also like to have a view of what's happening on Alma with the mitigations. She asked if it was necessary to run the lights all day? Would a decision to close Churchill be the only thing that would necessitate the traffic mitigations or would they be needed even if Churchill is kept open?

Female speaker Barbara asked about a real time exercise of closing Churchill for one to two weeks to see what really happens to the Kingsley slip roads. The pictures don't show this. She suggested doing a real-time test instead of spending the money on a simulation.

Female speaker noted she went to the Council priority meeting and one Council Member said Palo Alto needed to improve the flow of major arterials. The Embarcadero access and the way it moves should be studied.

Male speaker Michael referenced four diagrams in the handout titled work request four. He asked if the diagrams were correct because they show the taking of two properties entirely. Regarding the level of service for the underpass plan, the last line reads F. Did this analysis understand there to be two northbound lanes in total, one at surface and one below grade as oppose to three in the Price plan?

Steve Carlson remarked about the Churchill closure and the question about modeling higher levels of growth. It seemed there was a significant flaw in the process to not think beyond 2030. What would be the cost of modeling higher growth hypotheticals even not knowing what the growth will be years out.

Chair Naik responded to the suggestion of closing Churchill to test the closure. Mr. Shikada stated that can't be done without doing all the mitigations first. Also, responding to the speaker about the taking of two properties, the picture just showed trimming of some trees and if there was property taken for the slip road, it may be City property.

Mr. Black addressed the picture of the Embarcadero slip road and that was necessary within the software to get it to represent the ramp correctly under that scheme. On the other picture the ramp is shown in the correct place. There are software modeling tweaks needed to correctly represent what the design would be.

Chair Naik remarked it seemed the second two photographs which showed the cumulative conditions have the ramp part correct, the first two showing the AM/PM queues have the intersection correct.

Mr. Black explained there were two different designs. The first two were the original design for existing conditions that have a left turn from Embarcadero onto Kingsley. The second two are the designs that do not have the left turn lane. The cars have to go straight onto the slip ramp then make the turns at a signal at Alma. Mr. Black answered the remaining questions, what did the delay measured at Alma and Churchill represent? If Churchill was closed it's on the railroad crossing that's closed. Churchill and Alma would still be a T intersection and there would still be a signal there. The closure alternative included the bike underpass that crosses at the light and takes a ramp down. The bikes going under Alma wasn't modeled but it could be. With Mike Price's scheme there would be two separate signals, one down on the underpass (east) and a completely separate signal at the grade level (west). This is one lane at grade and one lane below. You can see that having only one lane would result in a poor level of service under 2030 conditions. Mike Price's original idea had one left turn lane and two through lanes which would work fine.

Ms. Cotton Gaines reminded everyone the Price alternative is called the Churchill partial underpass and the Alexis alternative is called the Meadow Charleston underpass.

Chair Naik thought what was said was whether there was a closure or not, a partial underpass option or not, mitigations probably should happen anyway generally in the City. What work is needed to get to the decision of making a recommendation for the grade separation and then separately mitigations for known concerns? The same with the bike/ped conversations. The concept of having the bikes and peds in a completely separate place makes things work more efficiently and is safer. The Council criteria requests clear, safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists crossing the rail corridor separate from vehicles. Only the Meadow Charleston underpass had the bikes/peds separately.

XCAP Member Kanne asked if there was a light at Alma and Lincoln?

Mr. Black replied no.

XCAP Member Reckdahl asked if the light at that ramp and the light on Kingsley were operated simultaneously.

Mr. Black answered they were coordinated.

#### **4. Discussion: Follow Up Discussion Regarding XCAP Workplan**

Ms. Cotton Gaines noted this was a follow up of the last two meetings where a version of the work plan was shared. Chair Naik and XCAP Member Klein had been working with staff to update that. An updated copy is not yet available to share with the Group. This would be a good opportunity to talk about the report itself and start thinking about some framing of what would be included.

Ed Shikada, City Manager added that earlier today Chair Naik had requested some assistance with writing sections. Staff could be helpful with that if they had a sense of how the overall outline, the Table of Contents, would be laid out.

Chair Naik commented that she watched the Council meeting when the Group got feedback from the Council Member about ideas they had of how the report might be structured, most specifically from Alison Cormack. In her mind the report should be basically something that someone could pick up and understand, the need for this, the methods used to understand the alternatives, criteria, pros and cons, the actual recommendations, mitigations for now concerns and any appendices, data and visualizations. The idea was to start writing the report now because there are parts that won't change no matter what the recommendations are. She thought staff could help with laying out the problem and need things which have been in previous staff reports. These could include the founding of XCAP, the direction the Council has taken. The second was help in collecting the information thus far from AECOM and the Santa Clara Valley Water District, a brief description of the creeks and the groundwater situation and what happens there. The third part was discussing funding. She did not want to touch the business tax, but XCAP Member Klein joined as an XCAP so he didn't see the AECOM presentation about how transportation projects get

funded at a federal level and those alternatives. A resident reading this and trying to understand what the Group was doing would need to understand where the money came from. Transportation projects and defined and then try to get the money. XCAP Member Klein's thinking was that the Group was not asked by Council to look at financing. The measurable criteria do have a part that says finance with feasible funding sources. She asked for suggestions talking about how funding works for transportation projects.

XCAP Member Kanne thought this was in the criteria so it should be mentioned but not digging into what types of available funding sources there were.

XCAP Member Reckdahl agreed with XCAP Member Klein that he didn't know that information and an overview of what's available would be useful and would probably help the Council to remind them of the different options and what hoops need to be jumped through.

XCAP Member Shen stated his question was on how to do it. To summarize the information from the AECOM presentation on financing, could those power point slides be put into the report or would it have to be written into the report?

Chair Naik replied XCAP Member Klein's stated goal was that somebody should be able to read all the words and never have to look in the appendix to understand what's being done. Having something written and not a power point might be more helpful. She asked if he thought the presentations needed to be in there given the criteria?

XCAP Member Shen answered that he was thinking of how much time it would take to assemble this. In the interest of saving time, the power point presentation should be put in. He suggested prioritizing what has to go in the report and if the remainder needs to be shortened then a power point presentation could be used, but some power points do require more text.

Mr. Shikada clarified his reason for suggesting the XCAP talk about this, is you need to talk about it. This has to be the XCAP that does the report, not from staff. He would make available all the electronic soft versions of prior reports, presentations that allow it to be most efficient, but it does need to reflect the XCAP's perspective. He referenced the discussion several meetings ago about the Problem Statement and this would be a perfect example, staff would rework it completely. It needs to be in a format and set the expectation as to how XCAP wants to structure it that it is deliverable. Thinking about the overall product and then prioritizing what goes into it would be time well spent as the XCAP as a whole or a small group who would bring it back to the group as a whole. For example, using the groundwater, stormwater, creeks issue, he previously suggested, you've talked about it and might bear having a discussion of how that applies for each of the different alternatives and the previous response was, don't think we really need to get into it. Staff is wondering how much depth to get into for each of the topic areas as well as how to structure the writeup.

XCAP Member Carrasco agreed that it's one of the criteria and it should be left; however, there is a Finance Committee that will look at it in more detail and it's relevant for the Group to understand it. He would leave tying it to the business tax should be left out. He thought the segments were very well done and a report in that

format would be clear. He agreed with Mr. Shikada about the amount of detail included.

XCAP Member Burton remarked it seemed there were potentially two audiences. One is the Council and the other is a thesis for history. He didn't think the Council wanted to read an extremely long report, so whatever could be summarized quickly then see the appendix would be the style of writing he would advocate. This did not apply to the actual alternatives and the discussion of the pros and cons. The background material such as finance should be in the appendix. He agreed with prioritizing the information.

Chair Naik indicated it would be best to break up in groups and be able to write several sections and she asked for volunteers

XCAP Member Kanne felt that it was hard to agree on sections before seeing them.

Char Naik advised she would put something out based on the sections that Allison brought up and those just discussed. That will be put next to the list of previous working groups on topics. The other challenge will be coediting all of the sections.

XCAP Member Kanne asked if there were examples of reports of a similar type that were successful and who is the primary audience? Is it the City Council Member and it should look like a staff report or more like a comprehensive plan where the audience is more the entire City?

Chair Naik replied it was up to the Group as to what it should look like.

Ms. Cotton Gaines informed that Council Member Cormack was thinking of some of the work with the Library Bond, so that could be a potential example.

XCAP Member Carrasco opined that the Group was reporting to Council and it should be assumed that they are knowledgeable about the project, so it didn't need to go really deep. Staff could take it further to explain it to the public.

XCAP Member agreed with XCAP Member Carrasco.

XCAP Member Shen asked if it would be unprofessional to do it completely in power point?

XCAP Member Burton advised that power point can be abused. One practice of good power point is not to put a lot of information, but primarily to be used as talking points. Also, it is possible to drag and drop complicated graphics into a word doc.

XCAP Member Reckdahl noted this was just the recommendation to Council and they may look at it and say, no, we're not listening to you, so the Group has to communicate what its thinking to Council.

XCAP Member Burton responded it has to be assumed that they don't have enough time on their own to go through all these issues and assume a very superficial baseline level of knowledge and then walk them through the thought process, what,

why and this is why the Group is recommending what it is. Criteria is a key part of that.

Chair Naik shared that at about the four hour and four-minute mark on the Council meeting of January 21 or 22 is where the Council comments begin.

XCAP Member Reckdahl expected what might happen is the Group will be pressed by time and things will drop off.

XCAP Member Templeton asked what if any part of the document would staff be contributing to?

Mr. Shikada replied they need a sense of the document in order to help. A collaborative document can be done especially when talking about having small groups responsible for sections that are then assembled.

XCAP Member Templeton remarked if it is public, everyone can see it, then it isn't closed.

Chair Naik asked for clarification from the City Attorney if it was a big Google doc for which there was a public link with all XCAP Members on it and see all comments, was that acceptable.

Mr. Shikada suggested the Group have at it and the City Attorney will be asked. This meeting can and should be the opportunity for feedback on the document.

XCAP Member Templeton clarified the proposal is, there would be a public link where they can view and any members of the committee can edit?

Chair Naik advised first figuring out the small groups working on different sections then putting it together so everyone can go through it. Regarding the work plan, there is no meeting next week. The following week deliberation will start, going around the room and have each member talk about where we are, how we're feeling about what we've got, do we have any big holes.

## **5. XCAP Member Updates and Working Groups Updates**

Chair Naik noted XCAP Member Templeton had to leave so there isn't a quorum so no decisions can be made. If any members had neighborhood meetings or other things to bring up this would be a good time.

Ms. Cotton Gaines advised the draft presentation was not complete yet. She will email it to XCAP Members who can email their thoughts back to her.

Chair Naik advised the updates included having additional information about the partial underpass and the Meadow Charleston underpass.

XCAP Member Burton noted he finally got the Midtown Residents Association to send out an email with all the upcoming meetings.

Chair Naik commented she is a Palo Alto neighborhoods lead and a notice went to all the neighborhoods in the City.

XCAP Member Reckdahl asked if Norm Matteoni's documents were available in electronic form.

Ms. Cotton Gaines responded they have been uploaded to the website for last week's meeting, under the February 5 meeting, Shared at Meeting Item 3, Resource Materials from Norm Matteoni.

Chair Naik indicated she did get an email from Pat Lau more about safety. She continues to have concerns about uniform fencing on the west side of Alma and other issues related to track safety. What is clear is that at this level of design there won't be the answers to the kinds of safety concerns she has been raising. They are important and there may be a sort of safety wish list that can be considered farther down into design. Chair Naik remarked she has been asked to speak at the Barron Park neighborhood association meeting in March.

Ms. Cotton Gaines advised she did not have an update about the business community but he will follow up with Judy Kleinberg.

Chair Naik shared that schools are interfacing with staff. She asked if there was something coming in writing about what their needs would be?

Ms. Cotton Gaines replied there is a City School Liaison Committee meeting next week. One question was, did the district want to have something in writing? That would be something the Board would have to decide what format that would be in.

Chair Naik remarked they were sensitive about taking a position on specific alternatives. The best thing would be for them to factually let the Group know what their needs were and that could be incorporated so there was some documentation.

XCAP Member Carrasco advised he spoke with about 20 architects. He updated them on where the Group is and why the review is needed.

Chair Naik explained the way Palo Alto Neighborhoods worked. She had been asked what the difference was between the Town Halls and she explained that.

Ms. Cotton Gaines shared that at the previous community meetings there is always a table called Other Crossings and staff was there to answer any questions not addressed in the bigger presentation.

Chair Naik asked if it would make sense for Mike Price and Elizabeth Alexis to be at a table to answer questions?

Ms. Cotton Gaines will let everyone know.

Chair Naik indicated there was a question about the meeting summaries that talked about any votes and things the Group has done. The XCAP email is now working.

Ms. Cotton Gaines reiterated the Group members can share general information to one another, but do not talk to each other through this email.

Chair Naik pointed out on the bottom of today's agenda was Additional General Resources. Ms. Cotton Gaines has added the link to the Google drive that has all the public documents collected to date as a group. Chair Naik returned to Working Group updates. She and XCAP Member Klein discussed having some segment that, in describing the problem, also basically describes what is happening with Caltrain. She had asked for help from staff collecting all that information and figuring out how to put that out. She felt the main part XCAP was working on was the deliberating part and why certain recommendations were made. She asked if there were bits where anyone felt comfortable at this point to at least take a stab at doing some of those.

XCAP Member Burton asked for a definition of that obligation.

XCAP Member Shen agreed but it's not really known what has to be done. To that end, he suggested spending the couple of days, someone build an outline and appendix and send that out in Google doc as soon as possible. Group members can then look at it, add, delete, edit. After that prioritizing can begin.

XCAP Member Burton asked Chair Naik to do preliminary assignments. He emphasized and XCAP Member Shen agreed that writing reports or documents takes a long time and there is a sense of urgency.

Chair Naik recommended tackling the factual things, what is the need, this many trains are coming, the Council voted on these things and summarizing that.

XCAP Member Reckdahl noted there has to be a thought process and some of that is done and some not done. He was confident that thought process could be communicated to Council but not confident all the evidence behind the steps can be documented.

XCAP Member Burton thought the mechanics of the thought process could be documented, but the actual decisions made on what basis is the part that hasn't been done.

XCAP Member Kanne opined that to some extent, on the basis of discussion will be subjective unless there is complete consensus. There is a lot that is factual that can be documented.

XCAP Member Burton recommended getting started on the factual things.

Chair Naik replied as decisions are made each member could voice his or her opinion. That could maybe be written up in a table, these were the reasons that came up for members about a particular thing. If it was decided to rank alternatives there could be caveats for those.

XCAP Member Carrasco asked for an outline of the big picture.

Chair Naik explained how this will get flushed out depended how deliberations were done. In the end there could be a listing of each alternative and where it was ranked, but the Group was supposed to show the methods used to determine the alternatives.

XCAP Member Burton noted the Council has to look at what the Group has done, if they agree with it or not and what is there to help shape their response.

Chair Naik replied that she and XCAP Member Klein felt they would really need each XCAP Member to elaborate reasons for their thinking to help the Council Members and the community to understand why specific decisions were made.

XCAP Member Burton mentioned something called the Delphi Technique and information could be found on the internet. During discussions everyone will listen to each other's ideas and will converge and convince each other.

Chair Naik remarked that she pushed City Council to have a Citizen Advisory Committee because everyone may have their own prejudices and ideas, but the more time the Committee sits together and listens to each other it's evident everyone is trying to solve the same problem but with different perspectives. She felt the more defined the vote was, the more security it would give the Council and the community that this Group really thought it through.

XCAP Member Burton advised the Group may not converge on one alternative. The Group could tell Council there are two alternatives and the reasons for each.

## **6. Staff Updates**

Mr. Kamhi let everyone know that Infrastructure for America, a federal grant for infrastructure was looked into. After contacting DOT, they advised that until a project was selected there was not chance for this and they want something that is more shovel ready. Potentially there were build grants that would be coming out which might work better with this timeline. He believed the minimal word was \$5 million. It could be used for preliminary design but it can't be used to look at preliminary designs for several alternatives. It is for a selected project, but the projects getting selected are closer to shovel ready. He advised there probably will not be one source of funding that would solve all the issues.

Chair Naik advised in an original CAP presentation there was a brief description of how other grade separations were funded and it showed the patchwork of where the money came from. That presentation was on the website. She also shared with everyone the blog post for Green Caltrain. It updated everyone on what the Caltrain Board discussed. There has been discussion about a regional mega measure that would include the nine Bay Area counties, a penny tax on all nine counties. That didn't seem to have strong support going into the 2020 ballot so Caltrain is now looking at their alternate backup funding plan. There is already legislation to allow for an eighth of a cent sales tax between San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara that would go to fund Caltrain. Caltrain is trying to figure out how that money would be used because the counties already contribute money voluntarily.

Mr. Kamhi remarked that the entire pot for the infrastructure grant for the entire country was \$900 million. That program required a 40 percent match of local funds.

Chair Naik shared that she understood there is a benefit to lumping projects together. One of the questions Caltrain is wrestling with is, for example, possibly combining all the things in Mountain View, Sunnyvale and Palo as one big project, it's more attractive from a funding perspective for big federal grants.

Mr. Kamhi responded sometime that's accurate. That is why he was pushing for this to be a mega project so it can get mega consideration. There is more impact going to D.C. and saying, look at this corridor this project is impacting. That could be within Caltrain's current study.

XCAP Member Carrasco thought it was time to add a landscape architect or someone who can focus on bikes and peds, not just putting that in whatever space is left over.

Chair Naik advised this level of design does not have the details to do that. That may not be necessary to choose an option. A wish list for those types of things could be asked for.

## **7. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 P.M.

## **8. Information Item: Draft Presentation for February 20 Town Hall [Attachment will be provided at XCAP meeting]**