

Expanded Community Advisory Panel (XCAP)

February 26, 2020

Special Meeting - Summary

Community Meeting Room

1. Welcome and Roll Call

Present: Gregory Brail, Phil Burton, Tony Carrasco, Megan Kanne, Larry Klein, Patricia Lau, Nadia Naik, Inyoung Cho, Cari Templeton, Adina Levin (arrived after roll call), Keith Reckdahl (arrived after roll call), David Shen (arrived after roll call)

Absent:

2. Oral Communications

First speaker stated she was advocating for safety as the highest priority for Churchill. In the Bicycle and Transportation Plan there is a policy to continue to prioritize safety and comfort of school children in street modification projects that affect school travel routes. There are a thousand bikes and pedestrians crossing Churchill daily. There is data showing that Churchill and Alma is very problematic in terms of collisions. She encouraged the group to concentrate on improving the flow on arterials at Embarcadero and Alma.

Eileen Fagan voiced the opinion that closing Churchill and viaducts are both horrible options. The viaduct will make City look like an industrial City. Closing Churchill is a complete over reaction. She encouraged this group to spend all of their energy on moving forward with Mike Price's option. Castilleja is extremely busy right now and she discouraged opening Castilleja and Park to mitigate closing Churchill.

Kathleen Golfine (**phonetic**) is concerned about Caltrain reserving the right add an additional two tracks between Mountain View and California Avenue.

Speaker four urged the Group to eliminate closing Churchill as an option as mitigation measures would not be adequate. Many residents in the South Gate neighborhood feel that closing Churchill would be damaging to property owners, quality of life, connection to the rest of the city and the composition of the neighborhood in the future.

Lucy Lapier strongly recommend this group look more broadly at the issue and not close Churchill. The school superintendent today wrote 1,000 kids a day cross Alma to get to PALY, plus those who work and study at Stanford. A lot could be done with Embarcadero Road, including aligning traffic signals. Save taxpayer money and don't close Churchill.

Michael Chicone noted the Embarcadero Underpass Alma Bridge is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The Group needs to understand what the implications are of closing Churchill and routing that traffic to Embarcadero. He thanked the City and the XCAP Group for their work.

Speaker seven remarked there has been a lot of feedback about the option at Churchill and he wanted to know how that feedback could be incorporated into the evaluation of the intersection. He hoped there could be a way that the issues raised by AECOM could be addressed by the group that is working on this proposal and considering the feedback might be a way of moving this along more quickly.

Chair Naik addressed the person talking about the second set of tracks. Sebastian Petty of Caltrain talked about the four tracks in Palo and Chair Naik encouraged that person to go to the Connecting Palo Alto website and listen to the January 29 meeting.

3. Discussion: Update Related to Measurable Criteria

Philip Kamhi, Chief Transportation Official advised there is no update, still working on it. Could not provide a timeline at this point.

Chair Naik reiterated that information will be needed for deliberations to move forward.

4. Action: XCAP Evaluation of Existing Alternatives, Process by Which to Review and Draft Report Outline

Chair Naik explained the intent of this was to discuss the proposed outline. A table of contents was discussed at the last meeting and a draft of that is available now. The XCAP Group is responsible for writing this report so to the extent possible, as much prewriting that can be done while still doing deliberating on things, and explaining to the average person what this process has been, we are hoping to have XCAP Member to write those. There is a list of working groups with a list of responsibilities going forward in terms of different proposed ideas for a Table of Contents. The idea would be that each group could write that section. They would then be turned into Nadia and XCAP Member Klein by March 25, who will do the editing of those.

XCAP Member Burton inquired about how many pages and what kind of narrative should this be?

Chair Naik indicated the way the table of contents is proposed, it is basically a description of the plan being dealt which is causing grade separations. There should be enough to make it understandable to the average person about what is going on.

XCAP Member Klein opined that if the job is done right this will be a document that is persuasive to the public, showing the reasoning for conclusions.

XCAP Member Kanne asked for clarification of "Additional Criteria XCAP Debated during the Process".

Chair Naik explained that would mean as the Group is going through this, it would be a new criterion that wasn't exactly specifically on there but was determined to be important or possibly a new understanding of it. This could also be criteria that has been gone through that hasn't really been flushed out.

XCAP Member Carrasco encouraged amplification for bikes, peds and handicapped and how its placed to get a higher priority than currently.

XCAP Member Lau remarked that she has worked as a consultant for Project Safety Net and has tracked information data for quite some time. She has looked at safety items and some items now on the Caltrain website regarding safety and suicide prevention. She has started her report and will share that information with Inyoung and Greg.

XCAP Member Brail asked about "Future Safety Consideration" which is under mitigations. Should his working group address such things as additional safety measures Palo Alto could take to reduce the risk of injury, even if there were no grade separations?

Chair Naik responded that this was under "Mitigations – Future Safety Considerations" because there may be things there is no answers for now, but things to definitely include. Also, things that can be done in the interim worth pursuing.

XCAP Member Brail then assumed there might be three sections such as background, interim mitigations and lastly solutions and considerations.

Chair Naik advised the general outline came from remarks by Council Member Cormack. When she discussed mitigations, it was mitigations for known issues related to the choices.

XCAP Member Brail asked if a Google doc could be created with everyone in the XCAP Group?

Ed Shikada, City Manager indicated at this time there isn't a specific recommendation for handling this. For the time being, this can be submitted. It will then be compiled and shared on an ongoing basis, then at the weekly meetings there can be a readout on where the draft stands.

XCAP Member Burton inquired if this has to be done on Google docs. He is more comfortable with Word and then send it to Ed?

Chair Naik advised there is no technology requirement but she encouraged group members to coordinate.

XCAP Member Templeton suggested including a community context paragraph in section 1 about the concern around safety for youth, suicide prevention and the activism that has had impact on this conversation. That could refer to the reports in the Appendix as well.

Chair Naik noted that might be covered under "Previous Actions Taken by the Council."

XCAP Member Cho clarified that her section, "Property Impacts" is putting all the existing analyses together.

Chair Naik responded it is summarizing what the process has been, such as Town Halls, meetings, links to website, etc.

XCAP Member Kanne asked where information such as that from the Superintendent of Schools fit in?

Chair Naik put it out to the Group. Possibly put this in section two "Methods to Understand Alternatives" possibly have "Other" to include any other feedback from PAUSD, the business community, Stanford, other big stakeholders. Maybe have a section 2.5, Other Input from Stakeholders. Chair Naik also indicated Chantal was going to try to get feedback from the business community. There hasn't been anyone from the business community other than Judy XXXX talk to the XCAP Group, so she encouraged everyone to get input from the business community.

XCAP Member Burton suggested a restructuring of the of the Table of Contents. Under Section two, could there be just two major sections, such as Internal to XCAP and Communication to the Public and Opportunities for Soliciting Feedback?

Chair Naik indicated Section two was intended to be more of a list of what was done. The actual deliberating part is in Section four, which is "Recommendations and Rationale". That is the XCAP process.

XCAP Member Brail encouraged covering high-speed rail in Section one.

Chair Naik replied that this should include as much information as needed to tell the story but not include things such as many pages of petitions. The Group is charged with making a recommendation to the Council and it is important to show the community has been heard but not each specific opinion or petition. There is a danger in attempting to summarize what neighborhoods feel.

XCAP Member Kanne thought it would help as each section is written, if there was an example of the writing style or voice.

XCAP Member Klein stated he wasn't worried about it. Having some different voices is okay. It will come out with uniform editing. Avoid technical jargon if you can.

XCAP Member Carrasco asked about Section four. Is there a process?

Chair Naik suggested taking some sort of formal action to agree to adopt this as a skeleton Table of Contents that can be adjusted if needed in the future, and commit to the different members in each section if everyone is okay with it. In answer to XCAP Member Carrasco's question, after today's first open discussion, she is meeting tomorrow with Chantal, Larry and Philip to think about exactly how to capture the rest of that part. For example, if an alternative is discarded to have a list of reasons why in a way that explains it clearly to the public.

Mr. Shikada remarked that earlier 2.5 was talked about as "Other". He felt this was a more appropriate location than the 5.2 where it was. The 5.2 is "Other Considerations".

Chair Naik opined that "Other Considerations" was more something like if you're going to build something elevated, we really think you should have sound walls, or plantings or something else.

Mr. Shikada replied to the extent that that affects the recommendation coming out of XCAP as in, which options, wouldn't it make more sense to be a part of the recommendation rather than a separate section.

Chair Naik noted she put it there because it came from Ms. Cormack's suggestion, "What's your recommendation and rationale, then mitigations of any known issues related to those." Those may merge together or be a subset.

XCAP Member Klein thought there were two different kinds of "Other Considerations". One is the consideration of what the school district is now saying, what a business group might say, etc. That seems like a catchall category for, if something else comes up that we want to talk about it goes there. The other is sort of hinting at, there might be things we're recommending that are outside of our purview like recommending a viaduct at Churchill, but also the idea of what a traffic engineer has brought up of expanding the intersection at El Camino and Embarcadero to eliminate that.

Chair Naik emphasized the goal is to try to not lose the contextual insights that XCAP Members have brought to this discussion that might get lost in many years.

XCAP Member Shen joined the Group and Chair Naik brought him up to date on what has transpired so far.

XCAP Member Burton noted Section four should be written differently than the rest of the report. He felt it would be the minutes of the meetings. It will have to include the minutes so the comments and issues are captured.

XCAP Member Klein felt the recommendations will be drawn directly from the minutes. The rationale is pros and cons.

XCAP Member Burton remarked the source for the rationale will be in the minutes.

XCAP Member Klein indicated they may be in the appendices. The rationale, pros and cons come from the meetings.

Chair Naik advised the future meetings will have better minutes.

Mr. Kamhi reported they are working on getting transcription service.

Chair Naik stated part of what will help them write that section is that there will be a transcribed version of the meetings. Moving on to Evaluation of Alternatives, fact sheets and criteria as of November 7 were made available to the Group Members for evaluation. The Council Adopted Criteria, had at the bottom, a summary of all of the costing. The new alternatives were not included because they are being reviewed.

Mr. Shikada noted the alternatives themselves are still being defined. There is some refinement that is happening and as a result of the Town Hall there may be some additional suggestions how it plays out.

Chair Naik advised those two alternatives could be set aside for now, discuss the other ones and once there was more information, bring those two alternatives in. Today there could be discussion about South Palo Alto, Meadow and Charleston. Each Group Member will be asked to talk about the various alternatives and where they are now. There is specific interest in if there are already any alternatives that could be ranked, especially the lowest.

XCAP Member Templeton related that draft documents have been considered before. If they are not complete, it's okay to share it earlier rather than wait for it to be complete.

Chair Naik explained this is the first phase she would like to start with the least favorites.

XCAP Member Templeton voiced her concern about the mitigations for the underground water channels. The engineers and community members didn't seem to excited about it. She recommended removing the item that interferes with the water paths the most, which is the tunnel for passenger and freight. That is the deepest tunnel and the one she would recommend removing that based on concerns from the water engineers and the community meeting last week.

Chair Naik asked if she meant both South Palo Alto tunnels with and without freight.

XCAP Member Templeton clarified that her lowest ranked item would be the one with both trains underground because it's a deeper tunnel. She continued that she would like to better understand from the engineers about the mitigations that are possible with trench or the at-grade freight options. Both of those would seem to have the same problems as the one with both passenger and freight underground because water is not very deep. Is it 20 percent better, 1 percent? She is very interested in the item not presented yet.

XCAP Member Lau noted regarding the trench and the tunnel, after reviewing the fact sheets and hearing from the engineers, the water issues and safety, because the trench and tunnel would still have open access means restriction efforts would still be an issue. These are also the most expensive alternatives. She feels least inclined to support these.

Chair Naik indicated that would be the South Palo Alto tunnel with and without freight and the trench.

XCAP Member Brail remarked when the process started, he was skeptical about the disruption and expense of building a tunnel through Palo Alto for aesthetic reasons. He believed the trench had the biggest impact on the creeks because according to information on old fact sheets the trench went through the creeks while the tunnels went under the creeks. Looking at fact sheets today, in all three underground options the creeks are affected. This puts a great risk of flooding of neighborhoods, it's not

good for the environment and will require many approvals from boards. He thought it might be possible to build a not unattractive viaduct but he has never seen an attractive trench. He would be in favor of eliminating the trench and both tunnel options. He is concerned that when the process started, all the people coming to the meetings were from the Meadow and Charleston neighborhood. Now, almost everyone speaking recently has been from the Churchill neighborhood.

XCAP Burton suggested that might be a problem about outreach.

XCAP Member Kanne agreed with a lot of what has been said, the tunnel options are too expensive and do affect the water table. Regarding the trench, she would like to reread the fact sheet again. She is concerning about not hearing from neighbors about the tiebacks that would be required.

XCAP Member Burton is concerned about the environmental impacts of the tunnels on the creek blockage, which will only get worse. He is also concerned about the cost and the number of regulatory approvals which could delay the process for many years. There could also be the potential for Caltrain to want to build passing tracks and which alternatives would be most amenable to adding passing tracks. Tunnels would probably be a disaster for adding tracks. The trench might be feasible but actually very hard to do. The viaduct and hybrid would be relatively easy to do.

XCAP Member Brail noted at the last Town Hall meeting he tried to ask and AECOM engineers if there were alternatives that were easier or harder to convert to four tracks. He supposed the trench would be harder.

XCAP Member Burton commented that to add tracks, you have to excavate behind the existing trench walls and it is a nightmare in practice. At the last Town Hall meeting he asked some of the engineers what they were hearing from people. They said there were favorable comments about the viaduct.

XCAP Member Templeton clarified there was nothing that said when the trench was built, it would have to be built only big enough for two tracks. It could be four but the cost would be doubled

XCAP Member Burton noted there could be a real permanent impact on Alma Street.

XCAP Member Carrasco didn't think any alternative that required siphon, the trench, tunnel and possibly the hybrid were good ideas for the reasons discussed earlier. He agreed with everything XCAP Member Brail said. Because the viaduct and hybrid were the remaining options, the next task should be how to design them that fit into Palo Alto.

Chair Naik indicated to make XCAP Member Carrasco's position clear, he would not be inclined to pursue either one of the South Palo Alto tunnels or the trench and possibly even the hybrid because it would still require pumping.

XCAP Member Carrasco added besides the pumping it is a lot of disruption on the train and vehicular traffic.

XCAP Member Reckdahl stated he lives in Charleston Meadows and when he talks to people about rail, almost everybody says, don't elevate the tracks. It is almost unanimous. However, when you look at the below-grade there are many complications with the water table, with the creek, the cost. He didn't think the tunnels were possible. Part of the problem with the trench is that currently it's 30 feet below the surface and that is excessive. Maybe that could be trimmed down to about 25 feet. He wants another look at that as a backup plan or emergency. He is not thrilled about any of the options. He would prefer an at-grade train track.

XCAP Member Burton pointed out that to reduce the clearance under the overpass road, the distance between the top of rail and the bottom of the overpass, that might require a Caltrain exception.

XCAP Member Klein remarked that his observation was that as people learn more about the various alternatives and their shortcomings, they become more open-minded to alternatives they initially rejected. Maybe the Charleston Meadows residents would be more amenable if they had more information.

XCAP Member Reckdahl thought the first reason Charleston Meadows residents were not showing up was because they were exhausted. The second is that they were not excited about any of the options.

XCAP Member Klein suggested the residents ought to show up because if they really want to have input, now is the time to do it.

XCAP Member Carrasco noted there is a lot of right-of-way especially along the Charleston Meadow, about 130 feet and a two-track the viaduct would take 48 feet of that. He asked for sections to show the neighbors what the impact of the viaduct could be and what could be done under the viaduct.

XCAP Member Cho would eliminate the viaduct for the South because they are ugly visually and noisy and change the characteristic of Palo Alto. She would eliminate the two tunnels because of the cost. She would also eliminate the trench because it is not practical due to cost and it is a hodge-podge in this section of Palo Alto.

XCAP Member Shen agreed with everyone else except. His top three to eliminate would be the tunnels and the trench because of cost. He was concerned about the train changing grades at the speeds they would be going. He felt that was not a good idea in general. He talked to a lot of people in his neighborhood and XCAP Member Reckdahl's and a viaduct was not a good thing for them, so he would also be against the viaduct.

XCAP Member Levin remarked looking at what the region is looking at in terms of funding for regional transportation, and even if a large regional transportation measure was passed or if there was supplemental funding from the region, the amount of money for all of the Caltrain grade separations, even with that, the extra cost of the trench and tunnels is substantial. Even the business tax in Palo Alto, \$10 million a year would go a long way towards paying a local match for the ones that weren't at the top tier of cost, but that is looking pretty out of reach. Also looking at the water issues, it's not just the difficulty of needing to do it, but paying the

operating cost of that because Caltrain would not pay for that. That puts the trench and tunnel options out of reach.

XCAP Member Kanne asked if there were any places along the corridor like the hybrids in San Mateo County where there is a higher grade?

Jim Lightbody from Caltrain advised there was an exception granted for the San Bruno hybrid grade separation in the northern part of the City of San Bruno. It was about 1.4 percent and that has been built. The design exception in San Francisco was related to the fact that there was no freight and the alignment was very restricted. That hasn't been built yet.

Chair Naik remarked that the viaduct shows the tracks moving to the side to be able to build the viaduct without needing shoofly tracks. The curvature AECOM looked at met the typical Caltrain requirements, but is that still something Caltrain considers okay or do the tracks need to be straightened out as much as possible, and that would not be okay?

Mr. Lightbody replied that hasn't specifically been looked at but in general if the design curves are accommodated it should be okay. Caltrain would want to look at that closely if that was one of the alternatives.

Chair Naik pointed out regarding the rollercoaster feel, if Caltrain has said that fits within their restrictions, it means it would be imperceptible to anybody riding the train.

Public Comment to this item.

Eileen Fagan from Southgate commented that as a business person for 35 years, this process is incredibly difficult to listen to everything when the first discussion item saying there are no measurable criteria. Why is there talk about eliminating options with no measure criteria. It is important this process be driven around criteria and long-range thinking. She strongly recommended not talking about eliminating options but first going back to the measurable criteria that are very long term and agreed upon by the City as the most important things.

Female speaker noted she lives on Alma near Loma Verde and her opposition to a viaduct have not changed. That is the worst solution in terms of how it would impact the City and her neighborhood. Based on the water issues, the trench and tunnels would not be viable solutions. She hoped the two new alternatives would be practical.

Male speaker advised that the San Bruno, it was just the north side that got the exception there is a 380 overpass to the San Bruno road. It was not both ends. The passing track conversation is somewhat a pointing the finger conversation. High-speed trains don't need passing tracks. At Caltrain meetings, they don't need passing tracks. But if you want trains running synchronized schedules, if you do the math, you need passing tracks somewhere.

Renee stated she lives on the tracks between Charleston and Meadow, and her neighborhood does not want the viaduct. There were many people who participated for a long time, and they just couldn't do it anymore.

Roland LeBrun remarked the amount mentioned by XCAP Member Levin is actually \$30 million. The City will be paying 60 percent out of the total of the taxes. The \$10 million was stated was because they are going to split the surplus of \$30 million three ways. He believed none of the AECOM solutions would work and he had presented an alternative that would work. Next, he felt it was bazaar to eliminate alternatives when right now there is no viable solution for Charleston. Lastly, he suggested studying the RFP that the San Francisco Transportation Authority issued last night for the 16th Street grade separation (the Pennsylvania Avenue extension). This is a \$1 million contract for one year and they spent \$600,000 drafting the RFP.

Female Speaker explained that in terms of people not coming to meetings, many people work or have children and they can't come to meetings that start at 4, 5 or 6 o'clock. She suggested the Group think about getting on the agendas for PTA meetings.

Mr. Shikada asked if the plan was to make some decision?

Chair Naik responded that she and XCAP Member Klein will speak, then talk about the table of contents and get a motion about that and then try to make a motion on unanimous decisions.

Mr. Shikada reported a follow up on the Town Hall, and thanked everyone who was involved. As a personal perspective, really constructive feedback and good discussion on the options presented including the new idea at Charleston and Meadow in particular. Notifications were provided to the properties that were shown as full acquisition and a letter regarding this was left on door hangers. For the real-time communications that were happening, the best way to provide an update to the community was to share the drawings that were being discussed with the technical group. He would rather have a door hanger left on the home that was being discussed rather than that homeowner finding out about it either from the press or from a neighbor. The hangars tried to get the word out to homeowners directly before the discussion happened and were properties that were full or potential full or looking at taking full backyard. No slivers or partials. The other letter for Group Members was a letter from the School District Superintendent. There was a memo from the School District received last night. He also noted there were two versions of the roundabout, one a Melville and one at Mumford with a half block to the west, really impinging on backyards.

XCAP Member Levin clarified that the taxes she talked about, the options, wasn't about the amount described for a Caltrain tax that would be put on the ballot by Caltrain. It was referring to the local tax that Palo Alto City Council has been contemplating putting on the ballot for Palo Alto Transportation and possibly housing needs. The \$10 million per year was the amount that Palo Alto City Council had said was the level they were considering.

XCAP Member Klein agreed with the comments by XCAP Members Burton and Templeton and others. He would eliminate the two tunnels and the trench. The two criteria for evaluating those that stood out to him were the water problems, the surprises you get when you start digging underground and the cost. Those far outweigh anything else you might want to consider currently. He thought there was a great consensus that there was no really desirable alternative.

Chair Naik also agreed with what XCAP Member Klein said. To the person who wondered about doing these things without criteria, it is actually because of the criteria that she was eliminating the trench and two South Palo Alto tunnels. She mentioned there were still some technical questions both about some of the assumptions that were used for the trench and the South Palo Alto tunnels. To make a motion today to eliminate those options, she wanted to ensure that while they can be eliminated, some of questions that remained could be something that if this doesn't get built now, if someone comes back in 50 years they might want to take a closer look at it. So, it's important to captures some of the questions there were about the trench and tunnel assumptions. She asked for a motion going back to the Table of Contents.

XCAP Member Brail put forward a motion to adopt the Table of Contents presented today as the draft working Table of Contents for the report and agree that each section will be worked on as noted.

Chair Naik checked with XCAP Member Levin, since she was not here when that was gone over, to make sure she was okay working with XCAP Member Burton to write the section about What is Caltrain's General Plan.

XCAP Member Kanne seconded the motion.

The motion was passed unanimously.

XCAP Member Klein put forward the motion to eliminate the two tunnels and the trench from XCAP consideration.

XCAP Member Carrasco seconded the motion.

Chair Naik asked for discussion.

XCAP Member Brail noted this was the first time in this process something was actually decided. The fact that a decision was made was significant. This was not a flip decision based on personal opinions. A lot of time was spent and much data reviewed and the decision was based on the criteria given by the Council.

XCAP Member Reckdahl remarked that he thought removing the trench was premature unless there was high confidence that leaving the at-grade will work. He has misgivings about the trench but thought it was better than the elevated option. He would not support taking the trench out at this point. There are issues with it, but it's the lesser of two evils when compared to elevated rail.

XCAP Member Klein replied that in light of that position, he would modify his motion to eliminate just the two South Palo Alto tunnels, and have a separate motion on the trench, so everyone's position is clear.

Chair Naik clarified that the motion was to eliminate the two South Palo Alto tunnels.

XCAP Member Carrasco seconded that motion.

That motion was passed unanimously.

XCAP Member Klein advised his second motion was to eliminate the trench.

XCAP Member Brail supported this, however, as discussed early on having this committee operate on a principal of consensus and if there was no need to vote now on this particular thing, perhaps now is not the time.

Chair Naik agreed with XCAP Member Brail's comments. She did want to hear more about what the concerns are about the trench and what other information needed to go forward. There was definite consensus on the South Palo Alto tunnels but some movement on the other things.

XCAP Member Klein was okay with this for one to two weeks, but the burden was on those with opposing views to come forward with compelling arguments.

XCAP Member Carrasco, speaking to his second, thought the trench was ugly and would need walls for security and sound. The main issues were the pumping of water or siphoning.

XCAP Member Burton addressed system failures such as the 100-year floods that are happening more frequently which could overwhelm the pumping or siphoning system, as well as the maintenance costs from the over silting that will occur with the heavy floods. The system could break down.

XCAP Member Reckdahl referred to the trench and noted some of the early designs of the trench showed the pipes coming up, so all the water would hit a pump and be elevated up above the trench and come back down. When talking to the water engineer, he noted that was not a good design. He thought a better design would be for the pumps to go down. And instead of it being a passive siphon, it would be an active siphon. You are using pumps to drive water under the trench. With that, if you had a power failure, you would have some passive water flow through there. If you're relying on electricity to pump over it, if the power goes out and you're not pumping, your trench would become a dam. The nice thing about a powered siphon would be that it didn't accumulate the same sediment as with a passive siphon. You would still have regulatory issues, Fish and Wildlife, etc.

Chair Naik clarified XCAP Member Reckdahl's concern as, he has heard from his neighbors not to go elevated, so if all else fails, this is the last potential underground option that might be workable.

XCAP Member Reckdahl reiterated that if Elizabeth's or Tony's ideas don't pan out, then scrubbing the trench would be his first choice.

Chair Naik read from the fact sheets regarding the need for lift stations/siphons.

XCAP Member Reckdahl clarified that lift station was the original design, taking all the water coming down the creek and lifting it over.

Chair Naik asked if staff could bring back clarification from AECOM to confirm whether it is a lift station or a siphon.

XCAP Member Klein moved to continue consideration of elimination of the trench until the next meeting when considering options for Meadow and Charleston.

XCAP Member unidentified seconded motion.

XCAP Member Levin inquired if the motion was comparing between the trench and the other options on the table or looking for additional information about whether the trench will be considered viable or not? She did not understand what the difference between lift station or siphon made in terms of this being an acceptable solution or not.

XCAP Member Reckdahl explained as designed right now, he would find this unacceptable because the lift station required a constant pump and failure of that pump causes the trench to become a dam. If there was at least a passive siphon during a power outage, as designed it's not great but is not a show stopper. He thought it would become feasible if you didn't need 30 feet top-or-rail to top-of-roadway clearance and 25 feet would be preferable and that would be if the rail at grade options didn't work.

XCAP Member Levin remarked that one of the things mentioned was reliability, passive would be more reliable than active pumping. Would the passive version still have the operating costs to the City and still have the issues with the wildlife and environmental challenges of getting it approved?

XCAP Member Reckdahl indicated there were really three designs which were what's on the paper, what's on the paper modified with replacing the lift station with an active pump and third, decreasing the depth of the trench to eliminate the siphon altogether. The last one would not have the wildlife issues. You would have to widen out the creek, but you would still size that creek to be able to get the full flow under the trench.

XCAP Member Levin noted she was trying to isolate the different issues that might affect people's decisions. She asked if there were good illustrations of the type of fencing that would be needed somewhere in the materials?

XCAP Member Reckdahl thought the fencing would be the same, just fencing off the rail.

Chair Naik replied there is a question about the vegetation that's possible. Right now, there is vegetation on the fencing and she thought the trenching required tiebacks and there could not be certain trees hiding that. It was never said if you could have vines similar to where there is today.

XCAP Member Levin asked would it be the same as it is today even considering the poles and wires needed for electric service? How does the fencing need for the trench to keep things off the poles and wires relate to what is there now?

Mr. Kamhi noted in the fact sheet it shows a twelve-foot permanent fence and it's also on the animation.

XCAP Member Levin related that it is eight feet now and it would go to twelve to protect the poles and wires.

XCAP Member Brail remarked this is an important decision. In going to the City Council criteria, in addition to the water issues, the cost estimate for the trench is twice as much as the viaduct, requires six years of construction instead of two or four years and the current design has tiebacks which require property easements which are property impacts.

Chair Naik asked if there was any other information the Group would request that staff get from AECOM in order to have a more thorough discussion in the future. The proposed agendas are the meeting on March 11 will have an update from staff for the remaining XCAP questions and potentially AECOM to present an update about the new alternatives and any pictures they might have. There may be an update to the matrix. The written sections are due on March 18.

XCAP Member Klein assumed that meant Charleston and Meadow would be taken up again on either March 11 or March 18. He suggested that XCAP Member Reckdahl work with staff to precisely word those three questions so answers could be returned by March 11 or March 18.

Chair Naik thought it would be more efficient to try to get through and finish South Palo Alto to get down to the top two or three while waiting for the next information. Based on what was heard, the popularity of the Churchill options relies heavily on one of the new alternatives. She would at least like to get through discussions about the preferences of a hybrid versus a viaduct in South Palo Alto sooner than Churchill.

Mr. Kamhi advised it might be a challenge to get the response from AECOM by next week. The pump versus siphon might not take as long, but the depth questions probably will.

Chair Naik asked if the Group wanted to discuss what the feeling are in terms of the two elevated options in Charleston and Meadow? She continued that the feedback she has gotten from the community and what she is struggling with is that most of the people in that neighborhood don't want anything elevated. So, she has very significant concerns when talking about the two elevated options. Some folks are more concerned with the viaduct which is five feet higher. The hybrid is a misnomer because actually considered a berm and an earthen berm better describes what is

being looked at. Hybrid makes it seem like the road goes down ten feet and it would go up ten feet. Really, the road only dips five feet and the berm goes up fifteen feet. From a height perspective it is a five-foot difference.

XCAP Member Brail explained that after the Town Hall meeting, he and Chair Naik had a conversation with the AECOM expert on rail noise and vibration. He said the picture of the hybrid option has no sound wall. So, a fifteen-foot elevated berm would actually increase the amount of wheel noise that people near the tracks get. In his opinion, the hybrid option, the berm is not a viable option without the sound wall to send the noise of the train wheels up. There is a lot of talk about how a viaduct is noisier than a berm. This person did not confirm that. There is nothing for the people who live near the tracks. He hasn't heard anyone who is an expert on rail noise tell him that a modern concrete viaduct is noisier to the people near the tracks than a berm.

Chair Naik asked when to expect the update about noise and vibration and the menu of mitigation options.

XCAP Member Burton mentioned the mitigation options are not just the sound wall, but also the materials, bedding, etc. Steel viaducts are much noisier.

XCAP Member Brail reiterated that all the options eliminate the sound of the train horns. The electrification of Caltrain eliminates the sound of the diesel engine except for the freight trains at night. That leaves only the sound of the train wheels.

Ms. Cotton Gaines stated staff has requested the analysis from AECOM and specifically, essentially tell us about the sound status quo and the sound of each of the alternatives that are under consideration. She will follow up with them to get an estimated timeline for that.

Chair Naik shared the other notable thing heard was that vegetation can be used to mitigate visual impacts, but there is no type of vegetation that can mitigate sound.

XCAP Member Brail mentioned one other thing not clear in the fact sheet about the viaduct is that the plan for the viaduct from AECOM is that the viaduct puts the train tracks farther from the houses on the side of Alma Street than the tracks are currently today. That will make a big, substantial difference between the Meadow Charleston viaduct and the Churchill viaduct.

Chair Naik also indicated that right now when you look at the cost estimates, on the criteria sheet it says the viaduct can be constructed in two years and the reason is that they do not heed shoofly tracks because of its position. If that is not acceptable to Caltrain for operational reasons because they want to make things straighter, that would make the cost of the viaduct go up. Clarification is needed from both AECOM and Caltrain as to whether that would be acceptable. Otherwise an additional caveat may need to be added such as, if its true shoofly tracks are not needed, the price is this. If they are needed it may be more and may take longer.

XCAP Member Levin asked what the timeframe was with the other alternatives regarding the new options that may have full property acquisition, when will that be known?

Chair Naik explained what was decided was to keep going through the existing ones and fold that information in when it is received.

XCAP Member Levin also inquired about the relative appearance, different opinions about berms and viaducts, etc. Are there any illustrations to do a fair comparison of aesthetics because aesthetics are important to people, so having that information would be helpful?

Ms. Cotton Gaines replied she would bifurcate this in two ways. Everything is in the conceptual planning part of the process. Throughout the entire process the exact design isn't known and that will be figured out later in the process.

XCAP Member Klein noted he was dismayed by the number of questions that are now coming forth, some of which will not get answered soon. This goes back to getting bogged down in questions, some of which are not answerable until the 70, 80 or 90 percent of design. Inevitably there will be imperfect knowledge when decisions are made. A decision needs to be made about what the Group really needs to know at this level.

XCAP Member Carrasco remarked that if you don't look at these kinds of details in the 5 percent design and see where they can stall you down the road, the Group will be repeating itself. For instance, what is known from Caltrain or AECOM if that ground surface can be used for a bike path or landscaping. Not getting that information is a big issue.

Chair Naik responded that was why just getting a menu of what the mitigations are was asked for. A decision will need to be made so knowing what the potential mitigations possible would be is important. Also, to the extent possible, broadcast to the Council what is recommended, such as a viaduct, and list the potential mitigations and the cost of all those mitigations.

XCAP Member Burton noted Chair Naik brought up an important point which is, even if all the design issues can't be figured now, options need to be preserved. To the point about using the right-of-way under the viaduct, he didn't think the viaduct would preclude conversion to park land. We're not compelling fencing but we ought to say very clearly that there is a strong desire, as part of the aesthetic mitigations, to see park land.

XCAP Member Klein agreed with XCAP Member Burton. It is a very different thing than asking all those questions and delaying until you get a nonanswer. List things that are desired if one alternative is selected over another.

5. XCAP Member Updates and Working Groups Updates

XCAP Member Levin reported regarding the regional mega measure its chances were not looking fantastic. The Caltrain Sacramento lobbyist reported the votes are looking very iffy. The regional measure would require a super majority vote because it's being put forth as an urgency bill, which is something that needs to go into effect the year it is passed. The latest was that the business consortium that is advancing a 1 cent sales tax had realized those votes were a challenge. ABAG prioritized the housing. The

latest proposal was to combine a transportation and housing measure still using the 1 cent sales tax; however, as of the day before yesterday, the leaders of the Regional Housing Bond Initiative were not onboard with this and they were continuing to pursue their housing bond. There was also a group of equity and environmental advocates that don't like the 1 cent sales tax because it is regressive, so they are doing polling on business tax and some other options. Caltrain had been saying that if it looked like a regional measure was not going to go forward, they would work on a local measure. Several years ago, a bill, SP97 that authorized Caltrain to put on a one-eighth percent sales tax to fund Caltrain. New options were being looked at. One option was all the new money raised would go towards paying for increased Caltrain service and Caltrain improvements that allowed Caltrain to carry more people. In another version, some of the member agencies, VTA in particular, said if there's a Caltrain tax, they would like it to rebate the so they wouldn't have to pay for Caltrain anymore. That would mean if people voted for a tax, they would be voting for less good new stuff and giving VTA, samTrans and San Francisco a rebate. There will be more information coming about options for a Caltrain tax. Under Caltrain's Business Plan, they have a long-term how to increase service by 2040 and now they have an idea about how to provide carrying more people significantly sooner, such that in the 2027 to 2030 timeframe, they could provide more frequent service, including eight trains per direction per hour. With basic electrification they will go from ten trains per hour to twelve and the next step potentially going from twelve to sixteen by 2027 to 2030.

Chair Naik asked if there was a place to find what the capital improvements necessary to get from twelve to sixteen and the cost of those improvements?

XCAP Member Levin replied Caltrain had some slide decks and she had a blob post Members can read. The cost for the more frequent service was about \$1.2 billion not including any additional grade separations. In order to get to longer trains they will need more changes to their train storage yards and that was why they put forward the idea of more frequent service before going to longer trains. A large part of the cost is for rolling stock.

Chair Naik reported on her Baron Park meeting. She will be presenting at their annual meeting. Her goal is that when people walk out of that meeting, they will have an understanding of what a grade separation is and they should visit the website and she will also be sending lots of links.

XCAP Member Cho reported a meeting with residents and Mike Pierce, sharing ideas and getting feedback. People are aware of new options.

Chair Naik asked for any suggestions to reach further into the community. They can be sent to her and Ms. Cotton Gaines. Since the City is interfacing with the District, is there a way to ask Don Austin about what can be done to keep the school community advised of upcoming public Town Hall meetings and driving the public to the websites.

Ms. Cotton Gaines shared that at the last City, School Liaison Committee meeting, Todd Collins who is on that committee mentioned that it would be good to share the information to the PTA's and he mentioned they would be able to post something

about the Town Hall at one of the high schools. They seemed optimistic at that time. The flyer will be updated.

Roland Lebrun remarked as an update on the sales tax. A one-eighth generates for San Francisco \$25.6 million, San Mateo County \$25 million, Santa Clara County \$56.5 million. He suggested separate pots for each county. When we pay for operations, updates and capital expenditure, it comes out of our pots, using the same formula used now. What is left over stays in the county, which means we will have \$30 million left. On the issues of longer platforms, this has been suggested forever. The plan is there will be no more baby bullets and after spending \$2 billion it will actually take 15 minutes longer between Dearden and San Francisco than it did five years ago.

Female speaker noted there was a mention of door hangers on properties that could possibly be seized assumed with the new options. She asked where she could find which properties and how many properties now projected to be needed? Is that on a website.

Mr. Kamhi answered it will be in the Town Hall presentation that will be on the website.

Female speaker commented that there were many negative comments regarding traffic with the Churchill closure and she wondered if the traffic engineer was there and this eight-page document that had all the traffic numbers, you could have mitigations because the LOS didn't change that much. What is the point of the meeting to just get general ideas out there that aren't well articulated so people can understand?

Chair Naik explained that the punch card document was basically people who attended the meeting and how they voted. There was a chart that showed what neighborhood they were from.

6. Staff Updates, Including Update on Town Hall Meeting(s)

Ms. Cotton Gaines addressed future Town Halls. The meeting tomorrow was specifically focused on Meadow, Charleston and it was postponed because there was an overlapping meeting for the North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan. The tentative date is March 26 and she was waiting for a confirmation from Gunn High School. Regarding the Town Hall meeting last week, the punch card was discussed. A high-level opportunity was made for people to be able to tell where they were. The comments were things people wrote related to each of the alternatives by location. The plans for the next Town Halls are most specific, one specifically about Churchill and one about Meadow, Charleston, going into more detail about each of the alternatives.

Chair Naik wondered if door hangers could be used for potential partial or slivers or temporary takes. It is important to get those people activated. The next two meetings are going to be geographically focused so you have a better chance of getting those folks to the meeting in their neighborhood.

Mr. Kamhi replied that could possibly be done as a mailer, but they will check with Planning to see how to do that most efficiently.

XCAP Member Burton asked if the Communications Director could really heavily publicize the next Town Halls.

Ms. Cotton Gaines explained there was more advertising done for these meetings than in the past, paid ads, radio, newspaper, utility bill inserts.

XCAP Member Burton suggested a survey to understand because there will be many more meetings in the future.

XCAP Member Carrasco discouraged informing people too soon about taking slivers.

Chair Naik stated the flyer just said issues that may impact your property. If the folks that are nearest the places that are going to be impacted are not activated, they will show up at the very last second. It's a delicate dance, so it's important to say at every meeting that these are just conceptual, but also yes, this is still happening, decisions are coming. She was concerned about the fatigue issue because the process in the beginning was quite erratic. A lot of people were lost with the CAP meetings because it didn't seem like things were going anywhere.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:01 P.M.