

Expanded Community Advisory Panel (XCAP)

May 6, 2020

Summary of Regular Meeting (virtual, through Zoom)

1. Welcome and Roll Call

Present: Gregory Brail, Phil Burton, Megan Kanne, Larry Klein, Adina Levin (arrived late), Keith Reckdahl, David Shen, Cari Templeton, Inyoung Cho

Absent: Tony Carrasco, Patricia Lau (excused)

Chair Naik explained the procedure for the virtual meeting.

2. Oral Communications

Ruchika reviewed the procedure for the oral communications.

David Kennedy addressed the closing of Churchill. He reminded everyone of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, Chapter Three of the Transportation Section, specifically Policy T3.13 regarding the request to preserve east-west connections to bind the City together and Policy T3.16, keep all existing railroad crossing open. Regarding the Churchill partial underpass discussed at the last meeting, he noted he didn't hear any of the concerns expressed for any of the crossings regarding motor vehicles. He asked that the Committee go back and reopen consideration of hybrid alternatives at all crossings, even if this requires some property acquisitions.

Brian expressed excitement about the alternative plans that have been proposed. (very poor audio)

Susan Newman advised that she couldn't find the agenda page on the website suddenly. She also remarked that she found last week's discussion of the partial underpass to be discouraging and disappointing. The partial underpass seemed to be a compromise that offered many benefits. The majority of residents of the South Gate neighborhood feel closing Churchill is a bad idea.

Eduardo thanked the XCAP Member for their work. He remarked that many people on Churchill and South Gate favored closing Churchill. All the work the XCAP Group, AECOM and the Transportation team illustrated the fact that it would be better for the whole City. Addressing the issues around Oregon and Embarcadero will produce a better result for the City as a whole. Studies indicated that 60 to 70 percent of cars going through Churchill were using it as a bypass. Those cars would then be using Oregon and Embarcadero as a bypass rather than going through and endangering the thousands of children and students going through there. Embarcadero and Oregon were built for those numbers of cars.

Rose Macinty (phonetic) supported everything Mr. Kennedy said. There were only about six east-west ways to cross the City. The City can't afford to use a crossing.

Chair Naik advised that the agenda is up on the website. All the attachments to the links are in the agenda. Sarah Wilson has gotten all the public comments and batched them together. When you open the agenda, at the bottom will be public comments. That will show all the public comments XCAP has gotten. She has also helped upload the summaries of the meetings. There will be a transcript available of the meetings with speakers Sabastian Petty and Norm Matteoni.

3. Action: Approve the Workplan and Estimated Timeline Updates in Light of COVID-19.

Chair Naik explained this was an item on the agenda last week. She and XCAP Member Klein met with Phil Kamhi and Ed Shikada to discuss the schedule going forward and how COVID was changing the timeline.

Phil Kamhi reviewed the workplan and estimated timeline updates. There would be Town Halls sometime in May. Realistically switching to this completely different format and getting it going is going to be tough to get it done in May. Complete information will be presented as it became available. There would be a meeting with the technical committee to go over Meadow Charleston. The current plan is to schedule two separate virtual on-demand Town Halls, potentially one for Churchill and another for Meadow Charleston. The plan, assuming there can be no in-person meetings, is to have those virtual Town Halls each up for three days or longer, have office hours at those different Town Halls to talk to somebody or provide a comment. They would want to track engagement and allow for opportunities to discuss different things. That would hopefully be in early June and push the two tentatively XCAP meetings in June to the second and fourth weeks to facilitate that interaction.

Chair Naik remarked that they are trying to make the meetings shorter. Grade separations are very important for some and not so much for others. It was felt there would be new information from AECOM about the Charleston Meadow options and there had been new information about Churchill. They want to make sure the community has time to respond to that but also to give any suggestions or improvements to those ideas. There has been good feedback about Churchill. It was important to make those the best alternatives possible so when XCAP gives their final recommendations to Council they are the best or multiple versions of the particular alternatives. This is time consuming for XCAP Members and hopefully they can continue to participate in the meetings. Patricia Lau will not be able to continue with XCAP. The XCAP member numbers are dwindling.

XCAP Member Klein advised the new estimated completion date of August 31 was based on having two meetings a month between now and then, estimating what needed to get done and then writing the report and review it.

Chair Naik asked for XCAPers comments on these things.

XCAP Member Kanne asked if the schedule that was attached was no longer up to date?

Chair Naik shared that the boxes should all be shifted into the May and June columns under the meetings schedule. The virtual Town Halls are pushed to June. Expanded

community engagement would move into June/July with an ultimate final date of August 31. She hoped to have an updated version of this spreadsheet by the next meeting. Her City Council update scheduled for May 18 and this will probably be bumped to June.

XCAP Member Kanne inquired about the timeline for the deliberations specifically.

Chair Naik advised in the top section "estimated remaining work for the XCAP" there were some placeholders in terms of how many meetings will be for information that's coming, any additional traffic analysis for Meadow and Charleston, one to two meetings for Churchill deliberations, probably two deliberations for Meadow and Charleston. These would depend on how things are going; they may move quicker than anticipated.

XCAP Member Brail remarked that an input to the schedule is what EACOM's proposed schedule is. The Group reviewed engineering work for the alternative for Churchill. He hasn't seen any engineering work for the Meadow and Charleston alternatives and didn't think there could be any real deliberations on that until the engineering work is received on what has been proposed.

Chair Naik shared that the technical group is meeting the middle of next week to review new information from AECOM and that will come to the XCAP at the next meeting.

Mr. Kamhi confirmed the technical working group is meeting next Wednesday to review this and AECOM will do their full presentation to XCAP on May 20.

XCAP Member Burton appreciated the idea that the virtual Town Halls were pushed out to June. He voiced concern about the situation currently and how much time is needed to adequately publicize the virtual Town Halls. What methods will be used?

Mr. Kamhi indicated they were still working on how to publicize this. The benefit to virtual is that it could be up for more than one day. Social media can be used to announce this. Getting the word out is a valid concern, there has been continued attendance at the XCAP meetings so word is getting out. The Chief Communications Officer will work on strategies.

XCAP Member Burton there is still a small minority of citizen who are involved. He didn't want people to find out after the fact that major decisions were made and they didn't have a chance to provide input. He volunteered himself as an extension of staff for the purposes of leveraging his time, effort and social networks to get the word out. Coordinated messaging is needed, what is at stake, how it will be done, why people need to get involved.

Mr. Kamhi replied he will probably take him up on that. He would like to provide the messaging to everybody and anybody who wants or can share it would be appreciated.

XCAP Member Burton agreed the information had to come from Mr. Kamhi's office.

XCAP Member Klein remarked that it was right about getting the updated information out about Charleston and Meadow before having a Town Hall meeting and that was coming in two weeks. There had to be a really big effort to publicize this. It was assumed somewhere down the line this will require a Citywide vote and people from other neighborhoods need to get involved.

Mr. Kamhi reiterated that they want to be able to track engagement at these events to understand who had visited the virtual Town Halls.

Chair Naik asked, because there wasn't an updated version of this agenda, should the Group still approve the workplan, approving August 31 as the target deadline. Town Halls will be roughly in June but these not XCAP's responsibility.

Mr. Kamhi advised procedurally the workplan could be approved with modifications as you choose, such as June Town Hall meetings are currently shown as May and note those were not specific dates, modifications that those June XCAP meetings to non-tentative meetings on the second and fourth rather than first and third.

Chair Naik clarified that the next XCAP meeting would stay May 20, then June 10 and June 24.

XCAP Member Reckdahl asked about AECOM support and looking at the schedule on the last page, most of the AECOM work disappears at the end of April. Was that because there was no work for them, or the contract ended? He suspected there would be some refinement desired on the Charleston, Meadow.

Mr. Kamhi answered that was just showing estimated completion dates for the work, not because the contract expired.

XCAP Member Reckdahl clarified that if there was some iteration work for them, they would still be on contract to do that.

Mr. Kamhi believed so but advised that came down to contract dollars.

Chair Naik noted on the schedule, below the second gray line, "review noise analysis", she recalled there was a question about if it was just about noise or noise and vibration and asked if there was an update on that.

Mr. Kamhi replied the scope did include vibration.

Chair Naik reminded everyone at the next meeting there should be an update from AECOM about Meadow, Charleston and potentially generalized noise and vibration information. The next agenda hasn't been completed by she noted the entire meeting may need to be just focused on the new alternatives and save the noise and vibration for the meeting after.

Mr. Kamhi advised the vibration analysis is included and some excerpts from scope is "predict project vibration levels and impacts similar to predicated noise levels, project vibration levels will be calculated using the FTA's transit noise and vibration impact assessment manual", "there will be a noise and vibration technical report which will

have the results in a concise technical report", "the report will provide an alternative analysis with a side-by-side comparison of potential noise and vibration impacts for each of the alternatives analyzed".

XCAP Member Reckdahl as if this was the information.

Mr. Kamhi replied that was the scope of the work they would be doing.

XCAP Member commented it would be great to have that information before any Town Halls. Many emails received mentioned noise and vibration as a reason to prefer one alternative or another.

Chair Naik encouraged discussing this information before it went to the Town Hall.

Mr. Kamhi replied that was why this meeting was critical to get the other things out of the way to have AECOM give their whole presentation at the next meeting if possible.

Chair Naik asked if it would be better to keep with the tentative schedule of tentative meetings which would be May 20 and June 3 and then have the Town Hall the second week of June and the fourth week in June so everything has been made public at an XCAP meeting before it went to a Town Hall meeting. The XCAP traditionally had provided feedback on things that would be in the Town Hall.

Mr. Kamhi agreed with Chair Naik's suggestion.

Public Comment

Susan Newman indicated she appreciated getting the AECOM information through the XCAP process before the Town Hall meetings.

Rachel Kellerman thank Megan Kanne for her service representing the entire north of Embarcadero on both the CAP and XCAP. She asked how the XCAP members were planning to engage with the community?

Chair Naik noted XCAP members were selected because they represented different sections and different areas of the community. Anybody can reach out to any of the XCAP members at any time. Returning to the schedule, she suggested not taking any action other than having August 31 as the hard deadline. On May 20 they can return with a firm, well-thought-out spreadsheet that showed all the upcoming dates to avoid confusion.

MOTION

XCAP Member Klein moved to suggest this is the date to the City Council.

XCAP Member Brail seconded the motion. He thought it was important to have a deadline to keep the momentum going.

Chair Naik called for a vote.

XCAP Member Brail voted yes.

XCAP Member Burton voted yes.

XCAP Member Cho voted yes.

XCAP Member Kanne voted yes.

XCAP Member Klein voted yes.

Chair Naik voted yes.

XCAP Member Reckdahl voted yes.

XCAP Member Shen voted yes.

XCAP Member Templeton voted yes.

The motion was passed with a vote of 9-0.

4. Action: Review and Approve the Follow-Up of the List of XCAP Questions

Chair Naik noted staff returned with the extensive list of questions.

XCAP Member Brail responded that this list looked very similar to what was seen last time.

Chair Naik shared that there were no changes but the list was not gone into detail.

XCAP Member Brail called attention to number five regarding funding for programs that “increased the safety and mobility of nonmotorized users”. He noted there were several aspects the Group was working on that could be in that category and maybe there might be applications due soon. He asked if staff or City Council has considered trying to apply for funding?

Mr. Kamhi explained any grade separation would be an improvement for the nonmotorized users. There could be a project that could be applicable for those funds. In order to apply an alternative needed be selected and start moving into an environmental.

XCAP Member Brail asked if there was anything that could be done to move any portion of this forward?

Mr. Kamhi responded as a separate project the Transportation team looks for funding for bike and ped improvements constantly. Funding opportunities are always looked for, such as a separate project not in relation to the grade separation. The Office of Transportation has a selected list of projects they follow that ties to the bike and ped plan, but there are challenges with applying for grant funding in Palo Alto.

Chair Naik related that completing the XCAP process allows the City to be able to do something. That work could be taken forward if there was funding available. Chair Naik reference number three about the Stanford Station, at a previous meeting she

had sent the City some historical information about an easement agreement between the City of Palo Alto, PAUSD, Stanford and others and asked if the answer reflected that information?

Mr. Kamhi advised that the answer reflected the response the City received from Caltrain. He would have to do a follow up to see if that information was sent to Caltrain.

Chair Naik indicated question number ten, and highlighted that meant capacity might be extended more than was intended. Procedurally this could be continued without vote.

No Public Comment

5. Action: Review Impacts of Caltrain Emails Related to Four Tracks and Any Necessary Actions.

Chair Naik advised no action was anticipated, but felt it was necessary to have this on the agenda.

XCAP Member Kanne asked how these emails might relate to one of the Churchill options that had the bike/ped underpass using Caltrain land adjacent to Alma in order to go down, under and back up and was that still on the table. Would Caltrain's letters have any impact on that? Was the concern more around the encroachment of the roadway or equally concerning if there was encroachment with bike/ped infrastructure?

XCAP Member Brail asked if Melissa Reggiardo with SamTrans represented Caltrain? His interpretation of the very top letter was, unless things change they would have to plan as if there was going to be a four track section somewhere in Palo Alto and assumed Palo Alto would have to let it be anywhere in Palo Alto but it didn't have to be the entire length of Palo Alto. Maybe if they were given a comprehensive plan that showed where it might go if it had to go, they would be okay with backing down on the concept that it has to be four tracks through the entire town.

Jim Lightbody was familiar with the emails. He didn't want to speak too much on behalf of Caltrain. The responses sent spoke for themselves. Melissa is the Manager of Planning and reports to Sebastian Petty. At this point they are taking a conservative approach in what they think is needed because it hasn't been developed yet.

Chair Naik noted there was Caltrain staff but if the City wanted to negotiate with Caltrain it would be the City Manager and Council signing letters that would be sent to the Caltrain Board. Caltrain has adopted a Rail Corridor Use Policy which is designed to be a supped-broad guiding principal for the entire fifty miles from San Francisco past Palo Alto. She suggested for XCAP if and when deliberations began and this became a topic, XCAP could present to the Council the potential implications, what are the inconsistencies and depending on the recommendation, the Council could move forward as they saw fit.

XCAP Member Brail remarked if the City Manager or Council was going to negotiate, they could take two tacks. One, no you can't have four tracks in this part of Palo Alto but you can have four tracks in that part. Second, we don't really believe in high-speed rail, you don't need four tracks.

XCAP Member Burton voiced his concern that the position of four tracks for all of Palo Alto is new and asked what, if anything has changed in their thinking?

XCAP Member Reckdahl questioned, looking at the satellite view, how can four tracks be put in?

Ed Shikada, City Manager shared on this topic that he had some early discussions with Sebastian Petty that related to the ability to fit four tracks in that area. It was within a few feet of what they were suggesting would be required. From Caltrain's perspective they would call it potentially possible but there may not have been much development in the last year.

XCAP Member Klein related that he did not read that there was a departure from four tracks, these being passing tracks, or is Caltrain now thinking they want to run four tracks from the Menlo Park border to the Mountain View border?

Jim Lightfoot responded there were two options, the medium service option which required a passing track at one of the stations in Palo Alto or Mountain View. There was then the high-service plan that required a continuous passing track for some distance in the Palo Alto/Mountain View section. Probably not the full length but somewhere in between there.

Chair Naik noted these had been shown on previous Caltrain presentations on illustrative examples and these were shown after Cal Ave, between Cal Ave and Mountain View. The Group probably will not get an answer on these specifics by August 31, so caveats would have to be put in on the decisions.

XCAP Member Levin remarked on the illustrative examples from Caltrain that were shorter than what they are now saying is the most conservative. She advised it was almost surely not Caltrain's intent to prevent Palo Alto from doing a grade separation because that will help Caltrain achieve greater frequency and capacity. If Palo Alto wanted to move forward with a decision, was there any way to reach an agreement about some narrower set of right-of-ways Caltrain needed to protect that would still achieve their goals?

Chair Naik explained her earlier suggestion about an XCAP specific recommendations with caveats. It was not worth expending political capital this early in the process until the alternatives are that XCAP is recommending and the Council supports are known.

XCAP Member Burton noted Palo Alto downtown was the second highest passenger loading station on the rail line, it wouldn't not make sense to have some trains bypassing downtown Palo Alto. There is a lighter load at California Avenue and there was space between Churchill and Cal Ave to build out the four-track lane.

XCAP Member Lao remembered at one of the community meetings, Caltrain said they didn't require four tracks at Churchill.

Chair Naik acknowledged Caltrain was walking back from what was originally represented in some of their documents because they were trying to choose the most conservative thing that was in line with the very broad policy they have adopted corridor-wide. They are now applying it scenario by scenario and this is the response addressing Churchill.

XCAP Member Levin explained the point she was making was that it might very well be negotiable and XCAP should refrain from things that would preclude Caltrain from doing its intent, but shouldn't refrain from something that would allow Caltrain to achieve its intent, but not with a maximalist interpretation of all the options open for the next forty years.

No Public Comment

Chair Naik noted this was scheduled as action but that was just to allow for any potential action so nothing needs to be done on this issue.

6. Discussion: Review and Approve Chari's XCAP Update Number five to City Council, tentatively scheduled for May 18th.

Mr. Kamhi replied the item said this was tentatively scheduled for May 18, but due to scheduling conflicts and items moved off the most recent agenda, this will be pushed to early June.

Chair Naik advised she flagged the item about the Stanford Station and she can update the report to reflect that. Second, she will update the paragraph concerning the noise and vibration information to reflect what Mr. Kamhi read as the scope of work expected from AECOM.

XCAP Member Brail noted the Group will be losing two members and should Council be asked to appoint replacements?

Chair Naik indicated her concern was the difficulty getting new members up to speed.

XCAP Member Brail agreed with her.

XCAP Member Kanne voice with deliberations happening within two months it didn't make sense to add people at this time. If this process should continue past August 31, things might need to be reassessed at that point.

XCAP Member Shen remarked with the virus going on it would probably be very difficult to get anyone at this point.

XCAP Member Burton asked of Members Kanne or Lau, if they had specific contacts or groups they have been working with, would they share them with the Group.

XCAP Member Templeton supported Chair Naik's recommendation about finding replacements. An alternative could be members of the community who have been participating regularly could be a pool to choose from if they felt the need to fill those vacancies.

Chair Naik indicated if there was a lot of interest in recruiting new people, she would formally agendaize it for the next meeting so the public could weight in on it. It didn't sound like there was enough interest to have that agendaized.

Mr. Shikada agreed that was correct.

XCAP Member Brail assumed that the mission hasn't changed due to COVID and it was still believed that pursuing grade separations made sense. Was that something that should be reiterated to the Council?

Chair Naik explained she and XCAP Member Klein were operating under the assumption that if the Council tells the Group they have to stop, they will stop. Otherwise the Group will keep going.

No Public Comment

Chair Naik asked if this item should be moved today subject to any additions at the next meeting?

Mr. Kamhi advised the next XCAP meeting is quite full.

Chair Naik asked for a vote to move this item with the corrections of getting noise and vibration information, correcting the outstanding XCAP questions and changing the date to whatever the date of the June Council meeting is.

XCAP Member Klein moved to approve the draft letter to make the report to the City Council at a meeting in June.

Chair Naik seconded the motion and a vote was taken.

XCAP Member Brail voted yes.

XCAP Member Burton voted yes.

XCAP Member Cho voted yes.

XCAP Member Kanne voted yes.

XCAP Member Klein voted yes.

XCAP Member Levin voted yes.

XCAP Member Levin voted yes.

XCAP Member Shen voted yes.

XCAP Member Templeton voted yes

Chair Naik voted yes.

The motion passed unanimously 10-0.

7. XCAP Member Updates and Working Groups Update

XCAP Member Kanne noted she was working on the draft section that was approved at the last meeting. She requested if anyone felt there was something missing or any feedback from the community on it, to pass that on to her so she can include it in the document she will provide at the next meeting.

XCAP Member Cho thought it was important to document the alternatives that had been gone through and she and XCAP Member Shen were tasked with writing an outline about each option.

XCAP Member Shen explained with the virus going on his time was very limited until school was out.

Chair Naik indicated at this point everyone can pitch in and with the deadline extended there would be a little more time to work on things.

XCAP Member Kanne noted the next meeting will be her last and asked about compiling the documents.

Chair Naik suggested she email what she has and that section would be updated as things moved forward. She asked if there had been any other big community responses other than the emails that members wanted to highlight and there were none. She again encouraged everyone to help publicize as much as possible when the City has the Town Halls ready. She asked the members of the community who had the most contact with XCAP Members Kanne and Lau to continue the communication with any of the XCAP Members through the XCAP emails or emails to individual XCAP Members.

XCAP Member Reckdahl indicated there seemed to be the same people who were engaged. Going door-to-door is the best way to contact people who aren't engaged, but right now that's not very productive.

Chair Naik inquired if there were things that had broken through to members while the coronavirus was going on that they paid attention to or caught their attention.

XCAP Member Brail thought things like webinars may be helpful.

Mr. Shikada reported he had posted on LinkedIn the table talk he was doing with the mayor every Friday. Prior to the shelter-in-place when he posted something on LinkedIn, he might get 1,000 to 1,500 views. This particular post had 5,100 view and it was just a table talk ad. Methods and how people spend their time are much different than before. Maybe two-minute videos of each of the alternatives, the virtual walkthroughs and getting feedback from that.

Chair Naik brought up having a voice-over to the existing videos with a prerecorded script and slow down the videos to go over all the caveats, but that might be a more effective way.

XCAP Member Brail thought that was the kind of thing members could help with, either the script or the recording.

Public Comment

Susan Newman liked the idea of doing the animations of the different alternatives and slowing it down and talking about it, using it as a visual focus for discussion of the different concerns of different parts of the community. The more that is laid out there the more people will be interested and will start to feel engaged. Make it an occasion for discussion.

Eileen Fergon (phonetic) thought it would be helpful to get more of the community engaged and slowed down visuals of what it would really look like at each of the intersections could be very helpful. Zoom is a good way to get people engaged. She suggested using the chat function extensively to let people ask their questions which would move faster than two minutes person.

Carrie felt the animations for Churchill were good but to really show Churchill with mitigations there should be an artist rendering of the Page Mill access points to Alma where the lights would be. Also, the turn movements at Kingsley should be shown. The animation went too fast. It would be nice to have a focus at Embarcadero and El Camino, what that would look like, how the lanes change to carry the traffic.

David Kennedy remarked he thought it would be good if there was a way to also represent the ripple effects of the alternatives.

Chair Naik agreed that artist renderings of what those traffic intersections might look like could make it easier to explain what would happen there.

Mr. Shikada advised there is conversation with AECOM about how to use the virtual Town Hall format they presented at the last meeting and build on the content already created that would minimize the need to do additional new content. Slowing things down and using the ability to explain things in more detail than at the typical Town Hall format is an interesting and important area for them to explore.

Chair Naik noted PAUSD didn't quite seem to understand even the two original alternatives and she wondered when that would be coming back on the agenda to make sure the School District was up-to-date on what the latest developments were.

Mr. Shikada responded there has been a lot of progress on the alternatives and it may be a good time to go back to them and look at everything that is on the table and allow them to give a little deeper feedback.

Chair Naik remarked it would also be very difficult at this time to get feedback from the business community.

8. Staff Updates

No staff updates

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 5:48 P.M.