

Expanded Community Advisory Panel (XCAP)

May 20, 2020

Regular Meeting (virtual, through Zoom)

Summary

1. Welcome and Roll Call

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

Absent: Patricia Lau (excused)

2. Oral Communications

Eduardo Jack (phonetic) addressed the Churchill closure and the Oregon, Embarcadero mitigation measures. Given the current reality of the impacted City, County and State budgets, he felt it was important to look at cost-effective analysis, benefit analysis across the whole City. Based on the analysis of AECOM and all of the additional traffic research, it was clear the Oregon, Embarcadero mitigation measures with a closure of Churchill was the best and most cost-effective solution for the whole City and the chart on page 18 outlined the clear benefits to the City.

Kathy Jordan noted that she and her neighbors in the eastern part of Embarcadero Road oppose closing the Churchill Avenue grade crossing and sending an additional 7,000 cars to Embarcadero Road. This was in opposition to the City Council's already adopted goals and guidelines for grade crossing recommendations. She asked the XCAP to step back on this process because, in her opinion, Caltrain's Business Plan assumptions were questionable pre-COVID projecting to triple ridership and now the projections were completely out of touch with reality. Caltrain claims it needs funds just to stay alive. Planning for and working to obtain funds for expensive and divisive grade crossings to help implement service levels that aren't supported by ridership projections doesn't make any sense. Data reflects that 19 percent more jobs within the Bay Area can be accessed by driving for 20 minutes and remote working is a trend that is likely to accelerate. The prospect of following through with a plan that invests \$22 billion in a mode that has declining ridership seemed the height of folly.

Jason Outlaw (phonetic) remarked there still seemed to be the ping-pong between neighborhoods. The traffic studies showed all the traffic problems originate from Embarcadero Road northward which is the arterial road in the area. The Hexagon traffic study data confirmed that was where the problem was. He asked XCAP to consider taking a step back because of the COVID crisis and in light of projected City and State budget deficits, look for the most cost-effective way to solve the rail traversal problem in Palo Alto. Objective analysis would show very clearly that the \$50 million spent on the Embarcadero and Oregon Expressway mitigations was far and away the biggest bang for the buck.

Shaun He (phonetic) believed something not talked about was that the turn onto Churchill to cross the tracks was also prone to accidents. Closing Churchill could save students from possible accidents. There are many good ideas including the upgrades to some of the other crossings at Embarcadero and Oregon.

Jeff Greenfield hoped the partial underpass solutions at Meadow and Charleston could be cleaned up to work effectively. He felt extending the bike and pedestrian access along the south side of Meadow so the separated bike lane would extend all the way to JLS School would be a good solution. That would help increase the turn options especially at Meadow. A single lane round about at Emerson or Ramona might help or adding turn options off of Alma as it approaches the grocery outlet. Providing better access for people to get in and out of the Ventura neighborhood would be good. He encouraged the Group to focus on workable solutions the community could understand and support.

Arnot Bullins stated he has sent an email to the Committee with some design recommendations on bicycle and pedestrian tunnels. He would like to see more pedestrian and bicycle centered approaches, a bicycle tunnel at Churchill instead of Kellogg. He hoped situations such as those at California Avenue and Embarcadero crossing could be avoided and encouraged straight cycling paths, no blank corners, wide enough to handle the number of bikes and an additional sidewalk of additional three feet for pedestrians.

Penny Elison (phonetic) agreed with comments by Jeff Greenfield and Arnot. Given the results of the level of service analysis she wondered if anyone considered the possibility of a one-lane roundabout on Charleston? Also, given the VTA bus service reductions and shuttle cuts, there will probably be an increase in the number of students who will be walking and biking. She was frustrated and disappointed that comments given in previous iterations about the very sharp turns in the Churchill options and the lack of clarity in the pedestrian, bicycle facilities in the east Meadow and Charleston renderings made it difficult to understand how it would work.

Neighbor Arkin (phonetic) remarked that her family had owned the Churchill property for over sixty years. She pointed out according to the Transportation and City Manager, Caltrain is unlikely or reluctant to consider giving the City any rights to their right-of-way which would prevent the current version of the partial underpass from being constructed as proposed and why was that still being discussed as an option? She asked who would pay for any alternative train option given the City and State projected deficits? The partial underpass at the Churchill corner was estimated to cost about \$150 million plus. Train ridership has decreased and may continue to decrease. It seemed like it was time to reassess the work and options considered by XCAP.

Brian commented he was very much in favor of keeping the train at grade or below grade. He noted regarding the Meadow crossing the proposed pedestrian bikeway was 20 feet wide, but the new bike bridge coming in South Palo Alto was 12 feet wide. He wondered if narrowing the pedestrian, bike path under Alma and Meadow might allow for the apartment building on the corner of Meadow and Alma to retain its driveway. Also, the traffic circle proposed on Charleston seemed huge and was great except for the taking of property. He suggested redesigning it as a one-lane traffic circle or possibly cutting it out since it's not required for the underpass.

Yorika Kishimoto noted her message was thinking about Palo Alto's long-term future, a clear priority should be on bike path networks in Palo Alto, dollars, best routes, sharing the right-of-way. She strongly supported consideration of the Price plan and the one-lane roundabout in South Palo Alto. She wished XCAP would make a strong recommendation to the City Council to move forward with the bike path improvements regardless of the schedule for grade separations. Also, the Comp Plan states clearly to keep the roads open and keep the network more walkable.

Terry Lark (phonetic) remarked the bottom line was doing what was best long term. The report and analysis were impressive that the mitigations at Oregon and Embarcadero were going to make things safer in Palo Alto and help with the Churchill closing.

Rachel Kellerman encouraged making sure all the bike/ped lanes are safe and not sacrifice one bike/ped lane safety for others including the existing routes. The bike/ped route Bryant, Kingsley to PALY is a very busy path. The current mitigation plan drives traffic onto the 1100 block of Emerson which runs perpendicular to that route and would imperil the safety of those on that bike/ped path. When recommendations are made, make sure there is further work done on that busy bike/ped path.

Sandy Ball (phonetic) was in favor of the rail trench as opposed to the underpass at Charleston and Meadow. The underpass would not be compatible with the neighborhood because it would extend too far and very industrial looking. The underpass would be unfriendly to families, students, bike and school corridor and would be aggressive and invasive to the neighborhood.

Patrice Banal remarked in the current plans there were two proposed roundabouts and those locations were currently ambiguous. He asked the Council to make sure those alternatives were clarified as soon as possible. He understood the main reason for the roundabouts was to enable left turns from Alma into West Charleston Road into the underpass. Why was it not possible to design some kind of left turn from Alma into West Charleston Road using the underpass?

Unnamed speaker shared her concern was what this did to the complex of the neighborhood, so having something like a double lane roundabout going into a community impacts the beginning of Charleston from Alma to Mumford. One block away are the community centers with library, schools, elder communities. Making it a one-lane roundabout reduces community takes. This is very invasive from Alma to Mumford and is unnecessary as a two-lane road. At some point common sense and fiscal sense need to prevail.

Monica Chan Brown (phonetic) encouraged the proposal to close Churchill, which was the most viable current option, especially cost wise and safety. The bike path should be on Churchill where it would be a direct access to Palo Alto High School.

Susan Newman directed her attention to some of the comments made about Churchill. She and her neighbors oppose the closure of Churchill. She acknowledged it was very important to pay attention to bicycle and pedestrian safety. She did raise the point that the viaduct and partial underpass proposals both had the potential to greatly

improve bicycle and pedestrian safety. The gains in safety from the viaduct design had rarely been articulated but in the absence of interruptions by train traffic, Palo Alto would be able to ensure safe crossing for the morning and afternoon PALY bike and pedestrian peaks by including a bike/ped only light cycle during peak hours at Churchill and Alma. In the absence of interruptions by trains, a peak hour traffic light could be installed at Castilleja and Churchill.

3. Action/Discussion: Churchill, Meadow and Charleston Grade Separation Traffic Analysis

Gary Black from Hexagon explained they had done traffic analyses of the original alternatives and now the new alternatives. The two tables showed some intersection level of service calculations for each alternative. Table 1 traffic volumes at the start of the study and Table 2 used the 2030 forecast from the General Plan EIR. All alternatives were level of service D or better with existing volumes. Looking at the 2030 General Plan volumes without any increased trains, with no improvements the viaduct would result in a level of service E for the PM and the partial underpass would have acceptable levels of service. The model used the existing number of trains, nine during the peak hour. He clarified these charts showed the whole intersection which included the traffic on Alma and Churchill together. Table 3 showed the alternatives for Meadow, Charleston using the existing traffic volumes. This new alternative was also called partial underpass because it didn't have all the connections. The intersections operated very poorly under existing conditions, with the viaduct there would be a poor level of service in the morning at Charleston and with the partial underpass there would be three intersections to look at but there would probably be only one signal on Alma at Charleston to control both ramps. He noted a one-lane roundabout was tried and it was complete gridlock.

Chair Naik asked if it was fair to say that the hybrid and trench would be the same?

Mr. Black answered yes. Table 4 presented the 2030 General Plan forecast volumes and level of service was about the same. At Charleston they couldn't get to level of service D operation even with a partial underpass because of the forecasted increase in traffic on Alma. The partial underpass generally works the best when compared to the other alternatives because there aren't as many turn movements.

XCAP Member Brail noted on that chart the partial underpass seemed to be freer of traffic than the other options.

Mr. Black explained the reason the level of service looked a little better was because the left turn from northbound Alma to westbound Charleston was the heaviest movement at that intersection. Under existing conditions that took a lot of green time for the arrow. With the partial underpass, those cars don't turn left, they turn right, go through the roundabout and come back. They don't go through the signal at all.

XCAP Member Brail assumed someone going north on Alma to go west on Charleston had no traffic light and didn't stop at all.

Mr. Black replied they would have to yield on the right turn if there were cars on the ramp.

XCAP Member Brail indicated that would significantly increase the amount of traffic on Charleston on that segment.

Mr. Black explained that was why the two-lane roundabout was needed.

XCAP Member Burton clarified one of the issues on the Meadow crossing was a restricted number of turning movements compared to currently and he asked if Hexagon modeled how much of that traffic spilled over onto Charleston?

Mr. Black answered yes.

XCAP Member Carrasco asked about Churchill, why was the new partial underpass performing so much better? Is the traffic moved to different locations?

Mr. Black responded yes, because you're simplifying the operation of the signal because not all movements would take place there. It was assumed the pedestrian/bike crossing would be an underpass so there would be no signal time for pedestrian or bike movements. The number of movements was reduced which reduced the number of phases at the signal.

XCAP Member Kanne remarked on Figure 4b there were 50 cars that were using Churchill to go westbound across Alma that now can't make that movement. It looks like they have to use Embarcadero. Was it the assumption that they would use Emerson to make that left-hand turn?

Mr. Black replied yes. There had been earlier conversation about doing changes at the Embarcadero interchange, but absent those changes that's what they would need to do.

Chair Naik pointed out that cars couldn't turn at Emerson either because there was a cement block at Emerson and Embarcadero. Cars would have to go to Waverly.

Mr. Black agreed that could be done or just use Lincoln to Emerson and go around that way.

XCAP Member Kanne also asked about the previous table that showed the level of service F for the South Charleston light and she asked why that specific intersection had such a poor level of service.

Mr. Black responded that was because of a conflict between traffic that wants to turn left going southbound on Alma across the traffic going northbound on Alma. The combination of that left turning through is higher than the conflicting traffic at the north ramp. This was broken apart for illustrative purposes. That would all function as a single system. Using Figure 10B diagram, in order to make a left turn from Alma onto Charleston cars would make a left turn at a signal, go onto the ramp that led to the roundabout. That left turn movement opposed the northbound traffic on Alma. That traffic would need to get a green arrow, then the northbound traffic on Alma would be stopped. In the 2030 General Plan, the northbound traffic on Alma was extremely busy.

XCAP Member Kanne asked if there were any other locations considered for the roundabout, Carlson or anywhere else?

Mr. Black explained the roundabout was schematic. Wright place was considered but that was not close enough to be able to get the ramp to join into Charleston underpass. It would be possible to move to farther.

XCAP Member Carrasco asked about the number of trains used in the model and he thought the full amount of 14 trains would be needed to explain to the public what the impacts would be between the time the mitigations were built and the period the trains increased in frequency. Using 14 trains would be helpful to explain to the public where the congestion would occur.

Mr. Black advised they could do that but not sure they could get the simulation to run with 14 trains. The simulation was trying to replicate actual traffic conditions. At some point you would get a gridlock situation and traffic couldn't move at all.

XCAP Member Carrasco indicated there would probably have to be some kind of mitigation during that period as to where traffic would go and how it would be shepherded through the City.

XCAP Member Klein referred to Table 4 and was concerned about the qualitative aspect of some of the delays on that table and asked if there were delays like those anywhere in the country?

Mr. Black remarked there were places that had delays that were that long. His rule of thumb was that if delays were ten minutes or more, then drivers would go somewhere else.

XCAP Member Klein commented that those numbers didn't blow up any of the models as being untenable.

XCAP Member Brail reiterated XCAP Member Carrasco's comment that it was very concerning and members of the public said they didn't believe Caltrain traffic would increase. This chart showed what traffic would look like at Meadow and Charleston even with no more trains than there are today. It was important to understand that if there were more trains from Caltrain, if it breaks the traffic forecasting model, that is important information.

XCAP Member Reckdahl referred to page 22 of the document showing the two-lane roundabout which is huge. The inner diameter of that roundabout is bigger than the current sidewalk-to-sidewalk road and asked about the rate of speed for that.

Mr. Black believed the roundabout was designed for 25 miles an hour. The outside diameter should be 160 feet. He advised roundabouts needed to be designed for trucks. The standard two-lane roundabout has 160-foot diameter. Design speed is different than how fast the cars would go.

XCAP Member Reckdahl asked what part of the roundabout didn't function when trying to go to one lane?

Mr. Black answered the entry point going eastbound where the ramp traffic joined with the underpass through traffic on Charleston. There was not enough space to merge them into one lane. In this scenario there was twice as much traffic on the road than currently because all the turning traffic had to be on the road. A one-lane roundabout could be pushed farther to the east to provide enough room for all traffic to merge into a single lane before the roundabout.

XCAP Member Reckdahl asked if the inner diameter would be the same with a one-lane roundabout.

Mr. Black responded you would still have to acquire right of way.

Peter DeStefano from AECOM explained the diameter of the roundabouts are generally dictated by the design vehicle turning movement to make sure a large vehicle can make the turn. A single-lane roundabout would essentially be getting rid of the outside lane. Regarding the merge rate, in the planning level phase, they tried to adhere to general design standards that were acceptable which would not be less than 25 to 1 or 20 to 1.

Chair Naik asked if it was fair to say at this level of planning it can't get any worse than this, and this could be refined?

Mr. DeStefano related the outside diameter of this roundabout was about 160 feet.

Mr. Shikada remarked that was at most the same size if not smaller than the roundabouts on the Stanford Campus, Sarah, Campus Drive, Escondido. Galvez was different because it was not a circle.

Mr. DeStefano clarified that the 160 feet was the roadway width. It didn't include the sidewalks on the outside.

XCAP Member Kanne asked if the blind corners in the ped/bike path in the underpass of the Churchill traffic plan could be removed where it goes down next to the train tracks or the one at Kellogg?

Mr. DeStefano replied he hadn't seen a question about that. It would probably mean taking more property to get rid of that blind corner.

XCAP Member Levin inquired if that route was required to be usable by trucks?

Mr. Black reiterated that these routes are also for use by buses, garbage trucks, other large vehicles.

Mr. DeStefano explained all the intersections and turning movements were laid out based off of a design vehicle called a WD40, which is a 40-foot length of axel for a bus which mimics fire trucks.

XCAP Member Shen related that the numbers for the Churchill partial underpass were modeled based on the design that had been talked about which had some concerns about taking Caltrain right-of-way and he asked if that was still the case.

Mr. Black responded yes.

Chair Naik asked why the Traffic Study went to 2030 but the Caltrain Business Plan went to 2040?

Mr. Black advised that the 2030 or future forecasts were based on the Palo Alto General Plan which was forecast to 2030. Because of COVID-19 those forecasts might get pushed out a number of years.

Chair Naik related that in the report a level of service of D or better for signalized and nonsignalized intersections was considered acceptable for Palo Alto. Is there anything in these designs that would be impacted by looking at that through the VMT lens instead of the LOS lens?

Mr. Black noted VMT didn't really come into play in these issues. That was a standard from the General Plan, not a CEQA issue.

Chair Naik indicated looking at Table 1, for the viaducts for both Churchill and South Palo Alto, the report kept the same number of stacking lanes and turning stacking lanes as there are currently. If you put a viaduct and still had the stacking lanes you would actually increase through traffic more than intended. It seemed the partial underpasses still did better.

Mr. Black explained the traffic volume is assumed the same for all the scenarios. There was no assumption of being able to fit more cars there.

Chair Naik commented the stacking lanes would allow for more traffic.

Mr. Black responded that you could push through more cars on the left turn, but you would be stopping cars southbound on Alma that can currently go when the train comes.

Chair Naik remarked for the South Palo Alto the table numbers did have the truck movements but that was not shown for Churchill. She thought there was a no truck restriction on the portion of Churchill that's on the west side of the tracks and wondered how PAUSD might play into the number of trucks coming and going. She remarked that what drove the placement of the Charleston roundabout was how quickly everyone is merging together. If that was moved farther back it could possibly be reduced to one lane.

Mr. Black answered yes.

Chair Naik asked if there was anything else that drove the placement and size of that roundabout?

Mr. Black noted from a traffic standpoint, there was the need to get the two lanes to come together, the ramp and the underpass on Charleston. The roundabout needed to be placed after those two lanes came together. The farther after that could affect getting away with a single lane roundabout but the farther out it was, the farther the drive.

Chair Naik remarked the improvements had been designed for the level of traffic that was wanted, not what there would be if it was left to go freely.

Mr. Black advised these are counts that exist today or future forecasts with Alma exactly functioning as it does currently.

Chair Naik indicated one of the current problems was that it was difficult to tweak the timing of the lights because of train preemptions at Meadow and Charleston and they are less than a mile apart. When there are two train preemptions so close to each other and with such an irregular train schedule, the lights can't be optimized. Theoretically with either the partial underpass or the viaduct, you have the opportunity to optimize the Alma lights that can't be done today. That was not reflected in the traffic study.

Mr. Black noted that was incorrect. The signals had been optimized for the viaduct option, recognizing that without the Caltrain preemption, you can adjust the signal timing to get it to work more efficiently.

Chair Naik inquired if that included along Alma itself between Meadow and Charleston?

Mr. Black replied yes.

XCAP Member Reckdahl addressed Tables 1 and 2, he asked if the Churchill closure included the Embarcadero and El Camino improvements?

Mr. Black responded this was just showing the level of service at Alma and Church. There would not be a backup queue that would go all the way from Embarcadero to Churchill and cause this intersection to lock up.

XCAP Member Reckdahl then assumed the grades were unchanged whether or not there were any improvements at Embarcadero and Alma.

Public Comment

Patrice Banal (audio broken up) she was uncomfortable hearing the placement could go anywhere on Charleston. If this needed to be two lanes, keeping it as close to Alma as possible would minimize some of the impact on the neighborhood and possibly less property takes.

Drew addressed the report labeling. Looking at Figure 4A, the red arrows, he questioned why there were 30 right turns onto Kellogg but this is schematic versus actually. Better labeling would help to understand these. Having some notes on the pages that talk about less turn movements on the partials, more travel time, shifting traffic, would also be helpful. Regarding Charleston and Meadow, instead of the roundabout, could there be a ramp down for Alma northbound then left turn onto Charleston, Arastradero. That could avoid the roundabout.

J. M. Malmeson hoped to keep the two lanes as close as possible to Alma on the eastern side.

Penny Elson (phonetic) noted she had a difficult time working through the set of renderings and drawings. Figure 10B conflicts with the plans and it is very confusing. She would like to see animation of what happens with the pedestrian and bicycle and grade separation. The drawings were not clear and these are school routes. She also encouraged labeling the slides more clearly.

Karen Kalinski (phonetic) voiced two points addressing Meadow. The first was weighing the four current alternatives for Meadow. The Meadow underpass would be less costly and require a shorter construction period than the other three options. Second, regarding crossing on east Meadow for bikes and pedestrians, AECOM noted the need for safe crossing for peds/bikes should be made at Ramona or Bryant. It made more sense to have a bike crossing at Bryant since that was designated as a Palo Alto bike route. Roundabouts were not safe for bikes. A raised crosswalk would be good for pedestrian but not convenient for wheelchairs, cyclists or strollers. She proposed a pedestrian/bike push-button activated crosswalk with flashing signals.

KWB encouraged indicating on the diagrams where people would walk, where bikes would be. At Charleston and El Camino how does a bike rider going east get to the bike lane on the north side? Explicit about property takes. Will the tree lawns on Alma and Charleston be taken away? She would like to see a comparison of the traffic that would end up on Charleston if there was a roundabout versus a trench.

4. Presentation by AECOM of Layout and Typical Sections for Meadow/Charleston Underpasses

Peter DeStefano made the presentation for the layout and typical sections for the Meadow and Charleston underpasses. Beginning with Meadow the rail will stay where it was today vertically and horizontally. Meadow would go underneath the railroad at the bridge and underneath Alma. There would be a ped/bike separated path from the south side of Meadow shown in the pink color. There would be a signalized intersection where the southbound off ramp connected to Meadow at the underpass. The intersection at Alma and Meadow had four legs with two potential turning movements for each leg for a total of eight potential movements. This alternative proposed only three of those eight movements, the first from west-bound Meadow turning right going onto north-bound Alma. The next two movements came from south-bound Alma, the off ramp into the intersection, into the underpass and then a right or left onto Meadow (south-bound Alma to east-bound or west-bound Meadow). All other turning movements would be prohibited in this configuration. On Park Boulevard there would not be vehicle access directly to Meadow. He shared some of the comments made at the technical working group last week. There was a desire to have a sidewalk or pedestrian connection connecting north-bound/south-bound on the east side of Alma, some kind of bridge across Meadow to make that connection. A ped/bike bridge over Meadow to connect both sides of Park Boulevard would require a sidewalk or access which would require property impacts to at least one of the parcels at the corner of Park and Meadow. There would be some kind of access for pedestrians and bikes to get from Park into the depressed ped/bike path. There would be a safe crossing at either Ramona or Bryant. Property impacts with this alternative would be sliver acquisitions fronting Meadow and each side, some along the north side of Park Boulevard, full acquisition of the apartment complex. There was a driveway

here fronting the north side of Meadow and there would be a huge elevation difference. He briefly went over the 3D renderings. Some of the comments made at the technical working group meeting were not included in these renderings.

XCAP Member Brail remarked it looked like the proposal was a two-way bike/ped path which was elevated and separated from traffic. Would someone going in the other direction cross over onto the bike path and cross back out?

Chair Naik answered that was what the additional bike/pedestrian improvements were. On page 1, 4A of the first packet there was a bike/ped bridge that went parallel to the train there that would allow bikes/peds to go to the other side of Park Boulevard. There was a question of how cyclists/peds would cross over there. Raised crosswalks with flashing beacons or a small roundabout at Ramona or Bryant were mentioned to allow cycles/peds to get to the other side and take the underpass.

XCAP Member Carrasco asked if the alternatives at Meadow and Charleston required shoofly tracks to construct these?

XCAP Member Kanne inquired if the light that allowed access to the grocery outlet still existed or did the ramps interfere with that?

Mr. DeStefano answered they should not. The ramps would be at grade by then.

XCAP Member Burton asked about the impacts to the properties where Park Boulevard was depressed about four feet.

Mr. DeStefano replied there would probably be driveway modifications to the first driveways. There may be a short retaining wall there. The yards could also be graded and sloped next to the sidewalk. There likely would not be a property acquisition but details haven't been hashed out yet.

XCAP Member Klein addressed the apartment building on Alma. Was there any easy fix so that property would not need to be taken?

Mr. DeStefano replied there was a significant elevation difference, eight to twelve feet. There probably wasn't any way to regrade that driveway.

XCAP Member Klein asked if Caltrain or the City acquired that property and that lot was totally leveled, what percentage of that property would be necessary to be used for these road improvements?

Mr. DeStefano advised it would be a small amount and the remained could be developed as something different.

XCAP Member Klein inquired if there was a possibility once the property was taken and used for the road, could some government entity reuse the property for housing?

Mr. Shikada answered yes.

Mr. DeStefano noted there was the potential to eliminate the wall, excavate all the granite and put a retaining wall on the other side. They were trying to avoid an extra lane.

Chair Naik remarked someone pointed out the bike-ped path was twenty feet but the new bridge was twelve. There was about eight feet to play with and did that give enough space to be able to keep that lane at the surface and salvage the apartment building?

Mr. DeStefano answered no. That created problems at the south side of Meadow because everything would have to be shifted to the south and that would mean more property acquisition on the south side.

XCAP Member Shen asked if the assumption was that all the traffic from Alma turning onto Meadow would be routed to Charleston and maybe Oregon?

Mr. Black responded most of it but not all. There were figures in the report that showed where they thought the traffic would be rerouted. What didn't go to Oregon would pick its way through the neighborhoods.

XCAP Member Levin inquired how many apartments were there in the apartment building?

Mr. Shikada didn't have that information but there were ten angled parking spaces in front of the building.

XCAP Member Levin asked if there was an alternative way for bikes/peds to go between Park and Meadow from the south side of Meadow?

Mr. DeStefano answered with the setup right now they would have to make the left and head westbound on Meadow and cross onto Meadow from there. There reason for that was there was an elevation difference between Meadow and that path.

XCAP Member Levin inquired if it was drawn somewhere in the packet showing how someone walking/biking could eventually complete their route?

Mr. De Stefano replied no. This was also a comment from the technical working group also.

Chair Naik advised the drawings, schematics and renderings didn't match because the technical working group was adding all the things related to bike/peds. It was agreed to show this to the community so everyone could participate with suggestions to fix what was not working. This was done at a level of trying to do a proof of concept to make sure there weren't any major engineering issues that prevented doing the concept for separating the cars and the trains. Work is now on the bike/ped element which was just as important. This was at an early phase. When the video is gone through the bike/peds things will not be seen but will be addressed later.

XCAP Member Reckdahl asked if it was possible to continue on the east side of Meadow, a twelve-foot bike lane all the way to JLS?

Mr. DeStefano replied that hadn't been looked at yet but hoped to improve the connectivity for peds and bikes from the proposed alternative to what's there today.

XCAP Member Reckdahl encouraged the connections at the end of the tunnel and also continue the bike lane as far as possible. He questioned the turning movements down to three from eight. If the apartment complex was acquired would there be room to add another lane under the underpass to support a left-turn lane from eastbound Meadow to northbound Alma?

Mr. DeStefano replied that had been looked at and there were additional property impacts. They would consider the issues and suggestions from XCAP Member Reckdahl.

XCAP Member Carrasco commented there seemed to be more slivers of property being acquired. Had the strategies changed to say these acquisitions were possible now and that constraint could be lifted a little? Did the ability to acquire property allow a different configuration that hadn't been thought about, making it easier for bikes/peds?

Chair Naik clarified what XCAP Member Carrasco was saying because this will also have shoofly tracks, were there improvement that could be made on the existing hybrid that could make this better?

Mr. DeStefano noted that could be possible and can be looked into.

XCAP Member Brail asked if different options could be done independently, a different option at each location?

Mr. DeStefano responded yes. These options were done in connection with the traffic study.

Chair Naik inquired if this assumption was that the bike/ped tunnel went down ten feet and why couldn't it go eight feet?

Mr. DeStefano presented the video which was a work in progress.

XCAP Member Burton asked if there was a continuous shoofly track between Meadow and Charleston?

Mr. DeStefano replied there would be a single shoofly to handle the construction of each. The shoofly might have to be lengthened.

Chair Naik noted there were some alternatives where the shoofly encroached further onto Alma. At the partial underpasses, Alma could stay open the entire time.

Mr. DeStefano thought that was the shoofly for the tunnel or the trench. The shoofly for the option shown and hybrid would be virtually identical.

Eddie (phonetic) advised they would have to look at the geometry.

Mr. Kamhi advised regarding shoofly, the information received from Caltrain had been uploaded on the website. He noted the question, what would it take for Caltrain to say no shoofly was needed or that some other construction method would be considered or allowed? Caltrain's response was, in order to make a determination, Caltrain would need more information on construction sequencing to understand the associated operating impacts in detail. Decisions related to whether or not Caltrain would accept certain operational impacts to accommodate the construction of a specific local project are ultimately a system-wide policy issue. In terms of construction sequencing, Caltrain would need to examine designs and construction phasing plans approximately 15 percent or conceptual planning phase. Part of Caltrain's design review would also focus on the ability of the project to build abutment and drive piles in a safe distance from electrified system components. Also, of note is that Caltrain's staff believes that such construction scenarios will likely take longer to build, while construction in an electrified environment will introduce more complexity. In advance of reviewing a detailed proposal, Caltrain's staff generally believes that there is a low probability that such a request would be approved. Should the City decide to provide the level of design detail needed for Caltrain to undertake a more detailed reviewed, the City and railroad would need to discuss the substantial level of effort needed to review such a request and the associated agreements and funding commitments that would be required. In the absence of a required design detail or a formal review, the default answer to such a question would be no. At early stages of project development, when many alternatives are being considered and detailed review by the railroad user, the railroad has yet to occur, we generally encourage communities to adhere to established railroad standards and construction methodologies as they develop concepts and alternatives. While this is a conservative approach, doing anything less heightens the risk that project impacts or costs may be understated at this early stage and that decisions may be made based on overly optimistic assumptions.

Public Comment

Penny Elson addressed the intersection of Park and East Meadow. She noted when teaching bike safety, children are taught to never ride the wrong way. She asked when going southbound on Park how do you go left on East Meadow?

Elizabeth encouraged the Group take seriously the idea at both Meadow and Charleston of extending those two-way bike paths all the way to Mitchell Park. She was concerned about the lane that was dipping down to the northbound Alma to Meadow. For the turns that were not being directly accommodated it would be useful to have some context as to the quantity of the, understanding the impacts on the neighborhoods.

Peggy Kraft (phonetic) wondered if anyone has addressed what happens if and when Caltrain decides to put four tracks in Palo Alto? What happens on East Meadow definitely impacts West and East Charleston. The two intersections should be considered together.

Unknown speaker noted we're not considering what will happen when high-speed rail comes and four tracks will be needed. All options should be looked at. High speed rail will make more noise. Also, the right turn from Charleston to Alma looks like the right turn from Page Mill to Alma which isn't a good ramp.

Drew remarked all the effort over the months to get the alternative proposal to this level and discussion and member's comments fleshes out that there are some sub options that could be potential, because if you have to build a shoofly track, then it's possible to raise the main line up a few feet and if you do that you shorten the retaining walls that are needed. He advocated for a left-turn pocket below Alma.

KWB was happy the bike lanes were all protected from the cars. She asked if there could be a bike lane in each direction and consider separating the pedestrians from the bikes.

Kushik Gondi (phonetic) was trying to understand there were only three out of eight turning options on Meadow. She felt this was not increasing connectivity in Palo Alto.

Karen Kalinski (phonetic) noted there were fourteen apartments in the building at the corner of Alma and East Meadow.

5. Action/Discussion: Approve Estimated Schedule/Workplan as of May 14, 2020

Mr. Kamhi reported the estimated schedule and workplan had been adjusted as discussed in the last two meetings. These were when the XCAP meets moving forward, when the XCAP deliberates on the alternatives and the Town Hall was shifted to later in June. An adjustment was made on the estimated remaining work, shifting on through July and into August and bringing back for some Council deliberations in August.

Chair Naik noted the technical working group met to review the first attempt at the Charleston, Meadow new concept. She hoped to have a second meeting to make sure they got the very best version before any virtual Town Halls. The virtual Town Halls were currently late June, early July dependent on when the technical working group meets. For XCAPers, there are meetings on June 3 and June 17 then a break for the Town Halls. In July and August, she hoped to have deliberations weekly. She pointed out ridership is currently down due to COVID-19 but these were long-term plans. The XCAPers purpose will be the write a report and capture all the work and analyses done. The schedule works towards having this done by the last week of August. The Group was being asked with the limited information available and just a very early level of design to give recommendations for what needed to be studied further, not a final decision.

XCAP Member Brail indicated it was critical for all members to be at the July and August meetings. He asked if virtual meetings would be possible through the end of September or in-person meetings?

Chair Naik responded for safety, assume they will be virtual.

Mr. Kamhi noted that was still to be determined, because this was a special allowance for the Brown Act.

XCAP Member Carrasco remarked there was now a lot of good information and possibly the consultant team may have some solutions. That might change the

alternatives. He asked if there was time allocated in the schedule to allow for that to happen?

Chair Naik indicated the goal was to have the new alternatives, the partial underpass a Churchill and Meadow/Charleston be refined to the level of the original alternatives, including cost estimates, construction rendering and time estimates. When completed, that would go to the Town Halls and then deliberate on that.

XCAP Member Carrasco wondered if there could be compromise on some constraints compared with others, there might be a different alternative. He was hearing a continued push for the three or four different categories of alternatives separately. Merger might be an idea to help alleviate some of the issues brought up by the residents and XCAP Members.

Chair Naik remarked what XCAP Member Carrasco raised early was the potential for raising the tracks on the existing alternatives to make it more of a hybrid. Mr. DeStefano advised the hybrid was the best hybrid that could be made without property impacts. If there was an alternative that was possibly missed it would have to be brought forward.

XCAP Member Carrasco didn't feel any of the alternatives were good. It would be a choice between the least worst. There could be a much better focus on bikes and peds. He asked the consultants if there might be other options.

Chair Naik remarked that with COVID there are greater budget constraints and more consultant time may not be in the budget.

XCAP Member Klein advised many times decisions are made with incomplete knowledge and the decision needed to be made with the current information.

Public Comment

Drew noted the fact that the shoofly track needs to be built on the new alternatives, and there were tweaks needed for each alternative.

Chair Naik remarked they way she and XCAP Member Klein had been thinking about this, a decision needed to be made at each area and should it go to the next level of study. The report writing would be critical.

Mr. Kamhi advised no action would be needed on this item, but note this would be taken to Council.

Chair Naik shared the next XCAP meeting is June 3. She will give the XCAP's update to Council on June 8. The AECOM contract extension was coming up so there may be some guidance from Council on what may or may not be available for the future.

Mr. Shikada explained he was trying to get both the AECOM contract and the XCAP update on the same Council agenda.

6. XCAP Member Updates and Working Group Updates

XCAP Member Kanne inquired if the bike and pedestrian options at Churchill would be permissible by Caltrain?

Mr. Kamhi answered there were a lot of unknowns similar to the other right-of-way requests. Things will have to be determined at a point further down the road. This was another possible discussion about when these decisions would need to happen. Referring to Caltrain's email, some of these decisions won't be able to be made until it is gets to a further point in the process.

Mr. Shikada commented that XCAP Member Kanne's contributions have been extraordinary and she will be missed.

XCAP Member Brail informed that he would not be at the next meeting.

Chair Naik discussed the possibility of changing the times of some of the meetings.

6. Staff Updates

None

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:09 P.M.