

Expanded Community Advisory Panel (XCAP)

THIS PACKET INCLUDES:

A compilation of emails (public comments, etc) submitted to the XCAP email box, XCAP@CityofPaloAlto.org, between **June 17 and July 1, 2020 at 12:00 pm (noon)**.



Note: This PDF contains bookmarks separating each email in this compilation. If you'd like to see the bookmarks but your internet browser doesn't show them, download this PDF from your browser, then re-open it in a PDF reader (such as Adobe Reader, Foxit, etc) and make sure your bookmarks panel is open.

From: [Nadia Naik](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Fwd: from neva yarkin regarding XCAP meeting
Date: Wednesday, June 17, 2020 1:29:41 PM

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This email went to only a subset of the XCAP so I'm forwarding to all of us as an FYI

Please DO NOT RESPOND TO THIS EMAIL

----- Forwarded message -----

From: neva yarkin <nevayarkin@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Jun 16, 2020 at 6:28 PM
Subject: from neva yarkin regarding XCAP meeting
To: Nadia Naik <nadianaik@gmail.com>, <Lklein40@gmail.com>, <greg@brail.org>, <philburton.pagradescrossings@gmail.com>, <tony@carrasco.com>, <reckdahl@yahoo.com>

June 16, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

During a May 2020 meeting with the XCAP, Philip Kamhi and Ed Shikada reported that Caltrains was 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** option from being constructed, as proposed.

Before any of this moves any further, wouldn't it be wise to get a direct answer from Caltrains regarding **RIGHT OF WAY** for the Partial Underpass Option? If Caltrains does not agree then the **Partial Underpass Option** is finished.

I also have major concerns regarding eminent domain in this area. Specifically, houses across from the Paly track that could be taken.

On the other side of the train tracks those houses on Alma might be in jeopardy too.

Can anyone make any guarantees that no eminent domain will happen with the Partial Underpass option?

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Neva Yarkin

Palo Alto

From: [Glenn Fisher](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: June 17 meeting comments
Date: Wednesday, June 17, 2020 5:02:53 PM

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Dear XCAP and Consultants:

1) Thank you all for the hard work and clear information you have presented. The Fact Sheets and Plan Overviews have provided a very clear view of the options and their challenges.

2) Bike & Pedestrian flow

I strongly support Tony and Nadia's comments about considering bike and pedestrian friendliness in the selection criteria. And yes, integration with city bike/pedestrian planning as well as traffic planning (Embarcadero/El Camino) as well as Alma, Meadow and Charleston would be very desirable. At the same time, it's critical to keep focus on the grade crossings to move forward while making sure that the grade crossing work dovetails with other city planning.

3) More community outreach! Now!

Nextdoor is a minimum. Town Halls aren't that feasible now, but covirus is not an excuse to stop community input. I strongly suggest a mailing to everyone in Palo Alto —we are ALL affected by this, and will pay for it. Right now, conversation is dominated by a few people who live close to the tracks or who own property that will be directly affected. We need to hear their voices, but consider them in the light of how this work affects everyone in Palo Alto.

From talking to my neighbors, thinking about grade separation is not precluded by covirus.

4) CalTrain Right of Way

I'm very concerned that many of the plans assume use of CalTrain Right of Way, but the response from CalTrain was pretty clear they are not interested in giving away any of their right of way. We should take that into account in moving forward; some of these plans are non-starters if we can't use CalTrain RoW.

5) CalTrain Passing Track

CalTrain was also pretty clear they will be building a passing track between Meadow and Charleston. How does that affect the three options - underpass, hybrid, viaduct? It seems it will impact cost at the least; will it also limit options by reducing incursions into right of way? It's also a big advantage to the underpass option.

6) Action

I strongly encourage you to move forward to giving the city council alternatives that are prioritized with pros/cons addressed. The council can decide to move forward or not, but they have given you a charter to give them alternatives.

7) At this point, having reviewed the detailed information, fact sheets, traffic and noise reports and meeting contents, I think the hybrid and viaduct are the best options: hybrid is the cheapest, viaduct the least disruptive during construction; both of them have less restrictions on bike/pedestrian and traffic flow than the underpass option, and there is less difference in sound impact between the 3 options than I would have expected.

As a resident of South Palo Alto who bikes up Meadow frequently, and also rides to California (W of the tracks) and Stanford/PAMF (also W of the tracks), and also drives more frequently than I'd like to PAMF, I want an option that provides easy bike riding across the tracks at all of our major crossings, as well as good traffic travel on Alma (the major N/S artery) with connections across the tracks. The Churchill options still don't seem to be great options for either bikes or cars.

Having a separated bike path doesn't add much if I have to cross a street twice to access the separated path; the

Hybrid and Viaduct options require crossing an intersection with a light, which isn't that bad an option.

Glenn Fisher

Adobe Meadow neighborhood

From: [Ken Joye](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [Kamhi, Philip](#); [Bhatia, Ripon](#)
Subject: thank you
Date: Wednesday, June 17, 2020 6:04:20 PM

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I attended the meeting of the XCAP today and spoke twice. Due to time constraints, I tried to be as succinct as possible and neglected to say “thank you” as I should have. Though I believe that there are some issues which need close attention (particularly around pedestrian and bicycle facilities), I don’t wish the tone of my comments to suggest that I fail to appreciate all the work that has been done to date by the committee members, city staff and consultants from AECOM. I also appreciate that the new alternatives presented today have sprung in part from reaction to alternatives which you have examined prior to this point. Thank you for all your service.

If I may, I would like to add that I agree that deliberations by the XCAP should follow the planned virtual town halls.

Ken Joye
Ventura neighborhood

From: [Arnout Boelens](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [Reckdahl, Keith](#); [Nicole Zoeller Boelens](#)
Subject: Feedback meeting June 17
Date: Thursday, June 18, 2020 9:53:31 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Dear Members of the XCAP Committee,

Thank you again for hosting yesterday's meeting and for all your thoughtful questions.

Considering how disruptive the current Meadow / Charleston Underpass design will be for both motor vehicle and ped/bike traffic, I think the preferred solution should be one of the much more elegant tunnel, trench, or hybrid designs. These options might seem expensive now, but when you recognize that whatever grade separation is built will easily be in place for 100+ years, it will be well worth the investment.

As I stated during my public comment, I would rather wait for passing trains than see this design implemented. However, if we have to make this design functional, there are a couple of ways to improve it:

* There are many sharp corners in the design which are impossible to navigate with a cargo bike or tandem. For a standard bike, the turn radius should be a minimum of 5m. Any turn that is sharper than that means that a bicycle has to slow down too much to be stable. To accommodate other types of bicycles (cargo, tandems, and bikes with trailers) you would need a considerably wider minimum radius. The engineers can use software called AutoTurn to check their design for various types of bicycles:

<https://www.transsoftsolutions.com/webinar/autoturn-pro-improving-bike-lane-designs-with-bicycle-simulations/>

* Whenever bicycles need to cross it seems they are supposed to use the pedestrian crossing. They should get their own bicycle crossing. A good design should make it clear where you have to go without signs.

* The bi-directional bicycle lane is drawn in the middle of the underpass. In the case of Meadow this should be on the left (west) side with a sidewalk on the right (east). This way, the sidewalk is not unnecessarily divided into two and there is more space to walk. In the case of Charleston the path also needs to be moved, but in the opposite direction.

* The Park Boulevard connector sidewalks and bridges do not seem wide enough. They have to fit a bidirectional bicycle path and sidewalk.

* The Kellog underpass design is really bad:
- Very narrow (California Ave tunnel 2.0)
- Very sharp blind corners (Homer tunnel 2.0)
The tunnel should be at Churchill.

* I think I overheard an engineer talking about a quite steep grade for cyclists. For a height

difference of 15ft, the recommended grade is 2%.

* Riding north on Charleston there does not seem to be a convenient way to cross the street to reach the underpass on the left (west) side of the road. This would need to be added.

Thank you again for providing a forum for citizens to share our observations and recommendations. The work this committee oversees is incredibly important, impacting the way our community will safely move about for decades to come. Please continue advocating for pedestrian/bike-friendly designs that current residents and future generations can be proud of.

Kind regards,

Nicole, Arnout, and Ava Zoeller Boelens

From: [Gary Lindgren](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Good Meeting
Date: Thursday, June 18, 2020 1:24:25 PM

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Dear XCAP Committee,

The June 17th meeting was very good as the problem issues have been brought to the surface. As Peter and Greg said, "there will always be tradeoffs." I totally agree with that, the question is, how do we deal with that. I assume that Peter was given the task to come with a plan for Meadow, but keep property acquisitions to a minimum. I suggest that Peter be given a new task, come up with a plan for **Meadow** that looks like the **Charleston** plan. That means that Meadow will need to be widened to at least 56 feet, the starting width for Charleston. Also, he should be given the task to not use any up or down slopes for side exits or entrances to Alma. I know this is not an easy decision on any property acquisitions that could be required, for me I'm thinking about the thousands of residents and non-residents that will be using these intersections in the future. I don't want them to be swearing to themselves, "how could anyone have approved this intersection when I can't make a turn needed to go where I want." Regarding the **Churchill, Partial Underpass**, I don't hear many people wanting this plan either. I suggest that Churchill be looked at again with the idea to widen it to at least 56 feet between Alma and Emerson. I know doing this design work is costly, how about if we don't get the pretty 3-D renderings and just do the most simple drawings, just to give XCAP and the public something to look at. Without this work on these new alternatives we can't really judge for sure whether the property acquisition is going to be as big an issue as many think and look at the trade-offs and judge with this new knowledge.

Thank You and Take Care,

Gary Lindgren

Gary Lindgren
585 Lincoln Ave
Palo Alto CA 94301

650-326-0655

[Check Out Possible Grade Separation Solution at Churchill](#) or
Copy and Paste <http://www.paloaltoenergy.org/churchill/>

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[@garyelindgren](#)

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Be Like Costco... do something in a different way

Don't trust Atoms...they make up everything

A part of good science is to see what everyone else can see but think what no one else has ever said.

The difference between being very smart and very foolish is often very small.

So many problems occur when people fail to be obedient when they are supposed to be obedient, and fail to be creative when they are supposed to be creative.

The secret to doing good research is always to be a little underemployed. You waste years by not being able to waste hours.

It is sometimes easier to make the world a better place than to prove you have made the world a better place.

Amos Tversky

From: [Gary Lindgren](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Trump Just Announce in Tweets a Bunch of Road Projects
Date: Thursday, June 18, 2020 6:04:32 PM

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Hello XCAP Committee,

Just noticed on Trump's Tweet page that he listed a bunch of road projects that USDOT is paying for. This goes along with Larry Klein message that we need to get moving in order to get funds from USDOT or other sources for grade separation.

Gary

Gary Lindgren
585 Lincoln Ave
Palo Alto CA 94301

650-326-0655

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Amos Tversky

From: [Patrice Banal](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#); [Nadia Naik](#); [Reckdahl, Keith](#); [Michael Wessel](#)
Subject: Charleston/Mumford option, xcap mtg
Date: Saturday, June 20, 2020 8:10:48 PM

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Hello all,

First, let me thank you for taking the time to vet the many, many options available to address the impact of increased train frequency on Palo Alto citizens, neighborhoods, and quality of life.

I watched this weeks meeting and have a few concerns:

1. Greg and Nadia, **YES! PLEASE** include specific details on the impacted real estate on Charleston Road and Alma for the option of a roundabout for all parties to clearly see. This would seem not only ethical, considering residence on Charleston have to disclaim and give notice about the possibility of property takes-(full or partial), if we try and sell our properties.

Residences on Charleston Road have lived under the cloud of eminent domain and losing our homes for years-it impacts our selling, relocating, making renovations, even committing to jobs, and our kids' school choices.

(Imagine losing your home, neighborhood, community, and school all in the name of progress-this is what our kids will be facing, especially since there are NO affordable vacancies in Palo Alto available to move to once our properties are taken).

We deserve a greater level of transparency, so highlighting/clarifying exactly which homes and families may be impacted for each option is imperative for good government and informed citizens.

Ideally, stronger outreach would also take place for impacted families.

2. Looking at the plans I am wondering why going North on Alma we will be prohibited from making a right hand turn onto Ely?

There will already be so much traffic on East Charleston that forcing more drivers to utilize this street, when we could easily utilize Ely seems to defeat the objective of flowing traffic more efficiently.

Can you please rethink this option?

3. Please look at the specific positioning of the roundabout on Charleston.

Keeping the roundabout as close to Alma as possible will help to maintain a neighborhood vs. a thoroughfare environment. The more invasive the roundabout, the more it erodes our quality of life-we never wanted to be the next Embarcadero, please help to minimize the roundabouts impact by committing to placing it as near Alma as possible.

Thank you for all your efforts, and I look forward to your response.

Best,

Pat fester

From: [Gary Lindgren](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Some More Thoughts
Date: Saturday, June 20, 2020 1:09:47 PM

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Hello XCAP,

I was just able to watch the video and so have some new ideas as I had to leave after 2 hours. Please continue with a recommendation to the council. Even it takes more time. Going this far and say, "this is what we learned", is not good. I think it is so important to look at Churchill again. Opening Churchill to 56 feet (Alma to Emerson) and have a real underpass could make the bike/pedestrian issues of Kellogg go away. Waiting until August for Virtual Forum means that any final decision must wait until October at the earliest. Waiting until after the election has some merit. On the meeting with CalTrain, have them look at the PowerPoint I put together on the Petrucco underpass concept for box jacking see <http://www.paloaltoenergy.org/box-jacking/> it has all the important details laid out.

Thank you and Take Care,
Gary Lindgren

Gary Lindgren
585 Lincoln Ave
Palo Alto CA 94301

650-326-0655

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Amos Tversky

From: [Be'eri Moalem](#)
To: [Council, City: Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Grade Separation
Date: Monday, June 22, 2020 2:29:03 PM

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Dear city council and anyone in the planning dept.

Please keep the Churchill Crossing Open. At least for Bikes! Underpass would be great. Same as Cal Ave underpass. It would be great to have an underpass/overpass hybrid at East Meadow and Charleston also. Prioritize and protect bikes! Also looking forward to San Antonio bike/ped overpass. It should not take this long! In my lifetime please!!

Thank you!
Be'eri Moalem
Resident at 3449 Cowper Street.

From: [Judy Rock](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#); [Council, City](#)
Subject: caltrain grade separation for Palo Alto
Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 9:18:45 PM

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Dear XCAP Committee and City Council,

As a resident of the Adobe Meadows neighborhood who regularly crosses the CalTrain tracks, I urge you to move forward quickly with selecting a preferred alternative and begin the process of grade separation for Palo Alto.

I am strongly in favor of a Churchill solution that allows traffic from Alma, rather than closing Churchill. In my experience traveling to areas of Palo Alto across the tracks, Embarcadero is already heavily overused and closing traffic on Churchill will adversely affect local neighborhoods as well as significantly impacting travel time.

For South Palo Alto, I am strongly in favor of an elevated CalTrain alternative. This would be less expensive than an underpass, will have less impact on the local area during construction, and provide more alternatives for travel and turning from Alma to cross streets, which preserves Alma as a major cross-town route.

Thank you,

Judy Rock
3872 Nathan Way
Palo Alto
rockjudy1@gmail.com

From: [Paul Ramsbottom](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#); citycouncil@cityofpaloalto.org; [Transportation](#)
Subject: Fwd: Upcoming XCAP Meeting - July 1
Date: Friday, June 26, 2020 9:04:45 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Dear Honorable Councilors and staff,

I would like to ask why you pressing ahead, with such apparent gusto?

A majority of Palo Alto residents do not want these changes, and if 2020 has shown us anything, it is a view of the future where communities, homes, workplaces, transit routes and commutes are radically different.

I would contend that a truly forward-thinking strategy for Palo Alto, is one that properly examines the lessons we are learning now. I have confidence that we will return to some kind of normality of course, but I suspect we will find a world that has radically changed.

The growth of our community should be managed in a holistic way, not by shoe-horning ever more commute and transit capacity. My modest home was built in 1953, right as the Federal Aid Highway Act was being drafted; legislation that effectively created our suburbs and commutes.

Until about March 6th of this year, we did as our parents and grandparents have done for the last 65 years. Our breathtakingly expensive homes are often left empty or under utilized during the day, as we burn fossil fuels to commute to even more exorbitantly priced offices (which we then leave empty every night, often shamefully illuminated, cooled and heated).

I do not know what the future holds for us, God willing this pandemic will reach a conclusion before too long. I sense one thing however, which is that history will not be kind to the whole concept of commuting. It is already feeling like an anachronism, and I respectfully urge you to place yourselves on the right side of that history.

Sincerely,

Paul Ramsbottom
3796 Redwood Circle

> Begin forwarded message:

>

> From: City of Palo Alto <transportation@cityofpaloalto.org>

> Subject: Upcoming XCAP Meeting - July 1

> Date: June 26, 2020 at 6:23:04 PM PDT

> To: <paulr1234@yahoo.com>

> Reply-To: City of Palo Alto <transportation@cityofpaloalto.org>

>

> Hello,

>

> There will be a meeting of the XCAP (Expanded Community Advisory Panel) on Wednesday, July 1, 2020 at 3:00 pm.

>

> The agenda is here: <https://connectingpaloalto.com/presentations-and-reports/>.

>

> It will be a virtual meeting, on Zoom. The access information is on the agenda. It is here too:
> • URL: <https://zoom.us/join>
> • Meeting ID: 954 5828 5655
> • Phone: 1-669-900-6833
> You can email your input at any time to xcap@cityofpaloalto.org and/or citycouncil@cityofpaloalto.org.
>
> Thank you,
>
> Sarah Wilson, Administrative Assistant
> City of Palo Alto, Office of Transportation
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From: [Philip C Hanawalt](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#); [Council, City](#)
Subject: High speed rail crossing at Churchill Street
Date: Saturday, June 27, 2020 12:50:09 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Dear XCAP Committee and Palo Alto City Council

I am a resident of South Palo Alto and I regularly cross the CalTrain tracks from Alma on Churchill, on my way to Stanford University. Please select a preferred alternative and begin the process of grade separation for Palo Alto.

I am favor a Churchill solution that allows traffic from Alma, rather than closing Churchill. Embarcadero is already heavily overused and closing traffic on Churchill will adversely affect local neighborhoods, and student travel from Palo Alto High, as well as significantly impacting the travel time for me and many others to Stanford.

For South Palo Alto, I am strongly in favor of an elevated CalTrain alternative. They are less expensive than an underpass, will have less impact on the local area during construction, and will provide more alternatives for turning from Alma to cross streets, preserving Alma as a major cross-town route.

Thank you,

Phil Hanawalt

Philip C Hanawalt
Professor of Biology
Department of Biology
Stanford University
Stanford CA 94305-5020
650-723-2424
hanawalt@stanford.edu

From: [Ken Joye](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [Kamhi, Philip](#); [Bhatia, Ripon](#); [PABAC](#)
Subject: input regarding Meadow/Charleston
Date: Saturday, June 27, 2020 9:54:21 AM

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regarding the Meadow/Charleston Underpass alternative:

This new alternative does not appear on the existing [Summary of Evaluation with City Council-Adopted Criteria](#); how would it be ranked versus the other options?

The [fact sheet](#) suggests that turning movements onto Meadow from “southbound” Park will be possible for automobiles, not sure if the [traffic study](#) discusses the reduced opportunity for such movements when the traffic light at Alma & Meadow changes functionality. That is, before grade separation, that traffic light would interrupt traffic flowing along Meadow, permitting turns onto Meadow (whether “westbound” turns from Park or “eastbound” turns from Second). What does the modeling show? This would definitely be an issue for bicyclists attempting to enter the 2-way bike/ped ramp from Second given the proposed alternative.

One of the “Neighborhood Considerations” for that Meadow/Charleston Underpass fact sheet should be the number of full and partial property acquisitions.

The “Neighborhood Considerations” for that Meadow/Charleston Underpass fact sheet do not include the potential for diversion of traffic due to reduced turning options. The [traffic study](#) shows some potential places for traffic diversion through neighborhoods but fails to illustrate any potential impact upon Wilkie Way, a designated bicycle boulevard connecting Palo Alto & Mountain View.

The proposed “solution” for bicycles to enter and exit the Charleston Road Roundabout involves a maneuver which would *never* be imposed upon a motorist on a public roadway (something akin to the Green Zone in Baghdad, Iraq). The design to enter the 2-way bike/ped ramp “west” of the rail tracks involves even more convoluted maneuvering.

The crosswalks shown at Second St and Emerson St may well require a [beacon](#) of some sort for pedestrians and bicycles to safely cross Meadow.

Regarding one of the Council criteria, the fact sheet states "*Pedestrian and cyclist mode separation will also help reduce intersection congestion*", without explicitly noting that the reduced congestion comes at a cost to pedestrians and cyclists (convoluted maneuvering).

In my attempt to compare this new alternative to one of those previously considered, I created this summary:

- Viaduct: \$500M, no property takings, high visual impact, 2 years construction, all turning options (reduced/no traffic diversion), no grade change or convoluted maneuvering for peds/bikes

- Underpass: \$450M, full and partial property takings, 4 years construction, limited turning options (traffic diversions), grade change and convoluted maneuvering for peds/bikes

Would you say that I the points I list are all correct? (I acknowledge that I have not attempted to summarize all factors).

I hope that you will address some of the issues I raise as you weigh the new Underpass alternative versus other options.

thanks for your consideration,
Ken Joye
PABAC chair

From: [Gary Lindgren](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Suggest The Third Option
Date: Saturday, June 27, 2020 11:24:30 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Hello XCAP Committee,

I suggest that you adopt the Third Option where you give your recommendations. You have been working too long on this and not to come up with something that the Council can work with as their starting point.

Regarding Meadow: What you have now for the underpass is not acceptable. An intersection's purpose is to allow changes in direction for vehicles coming and going. An intersection that only allows 38% of possible direction changes is not acceptable. You are going to have so many residents and visitors wondering 'how could they do this.' AECOM must look at Meadow again and widen the street as needed in order to come up with a design that looks like Charleston. This is a must.

Regarding Churchill: The so called Partial Underpass solution is also not acceptable. The council's requirement for "Facilitate movement across the corridor for all modes of transportation" is certainly not met. Vehicles on the east side of Alma can only make right turns, this is not acceptable. The majority of Palo Alto's residents live east of Alma, a full underpass is a must. As with Meadow, AECOM must look at Churchill again with a widened Churchill in order to allow movement like Charleston's underpass solution.

On the **Matrix Summaries:** I suggest that Meadow and Charleston be separated such that differences can be noted. For instance, for the Underpass column and item A. The color should be changed to **RED**, as the "Facilitate movement across the corridor for all modes of transportation" is certainly not met as only 38% of direction changes is now allowed.

The **Matrix Summary for Churchill** should also be changed. The "Partial Underpass" and item A color should be changed from **Blue** to **Red** as drivers east of Alma can only make a right turn.

Take Care Now,

Gary Lindgren

Gary Lindgren
585 Lincoln Ave
Palo Alto CA 94301

650-326-0655

[Check Out Possible Grade Separation Solution at Churchill](#) or

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Amos Tversky

From: [William Robinson](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [PABAC](#)
Subject: Evaluation for All Modes of transportation unsatisfactory for Meadow-Charleston
Date: Sunday, June 28, 2020 10:30:02 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Be cautious of opening attachments and clicking on links.

Dear XCAP, PABAC and others interested. I have reviewed the [June 26 Comparison Matrix](#), item 4a for the July 1 meeting. Thank you for supplying matrix and comment/response data, item 4b.

I disagree with the application of BLUE (improved) for Criteria C across all C-M Options

Criteria C needs more granularity to include EACH mode of transportation. I suggest there are significant differences between options.

(I suggest the following statements be answered No, Yes or Unsure. Then answers evaluated in aggregate to choose a “color”. Yes is blue, No is red, Unsure is yellow.)

- C.1 All turning movements for motorized vehicles are unchanged.
- C.2 Navigation assisted* vehicles operate safely with slopes, sightlines and novel turning movements.
- C.3 Emergency responders can be seen and heard in time to avoid collision.
- C.4 Bike and Pedestrian ways connect to pre-existing paths without change or obstruction.
- C.5 Pedestrians, prams, carts and non-electric bicycles have no slopes to navigate.
- C.6 Pedestrians travel no greater distances to reach destinations prior reached.

*Navigation assisted vehicles: Current and future (self driving) vehicles may enter the Option for the first time (new visitor or delivery). Will slopes, walls and other features be easily recognized and immediately “learned” by the vehicle? It is assumed that traffic signals and signage are level to the line of travel and sightlines are clear.

As an exercise and example, here is row C of the comparison matrix.

All transportation modes		Rail Grade Separation Options for Meadow-Charleston						
	Criteria							
		As is now	Trench	Hybrid	Viaduct	SPA tunnel Freight	SPA tunnel Freight at grade	Underpass
C.1	All turning movements for <u>motorized</u> vehicles are unchanged.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
C.2	Navigation assisted* vehicles operate safely with slopes, sightlines and novel turning movements.	Yes	Yes	Unsure	Yes	Yes	Yes	Unsure
C.3	Emergency responders can be seen and heard in time to avoid collision.	Yes	Yes	Unsure	Yes	Yes	Yes	Unsure
C.4	Bike and Pedestrian ways connect to pre-existing paths without change or obstruction.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
C.5	Pedestrians, prams, carts and non-electric bicycles have no slopes to navigate.	Unsure (1)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
C.6	Pedestrians travel no greater distances to reach destinations prior reached.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	Number of Yes's	5	6	3	6	6	4	
	Number of No's			1			2	4
	Number of Unsure's	1		2				2
	Are all modes improved?	NA	Yes	a little	Yes	Yes	a little	No

(1) C.5 Currently, pedestrians, prams, carts and bicycles navigate significant slopes due to the railroad bed.

William'Rob' Robinson, member PABAC (Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee), Palo Alto since 2005

From: [Arnout Boelens](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [Reckdahl, Keith](#); [Nicole Zoeller Boelens](#)
Subject: Please do not postpone refinements to ped/bike infrastructure until the next phase (July 1st meeting)
Date: Sunday, June 28, 2020 11:38:34 AM

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Dear members of the XCAP committee,

It seems that the design process for the underpass proposal is still very car centric, and that suggestions from the community (and XCAP committee members) for improvements to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure continue to be ignored.

Looking at "RESPONSE TO COMMENTS FROM XCAP ON 6/17/20" the recurring answer is: "This will be addressed in the next stage of the project". However, I do not see any blind 90 degree corners for cars or underpasses for cars that are too narrow, which will be addressed "later". Instead, I see smooth curves, and people losing their homes because Meadow is turned into a 4 lane highway with a 2 lane roundabout, against the concerns of local residents.

For full transparency I would like to strongly suggest that a complete plan is presented for the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure at the upcoming community town hall. If the bicycle infrastructure cannot be further improved, I think it is important to be honest about that, and list it as a disadvantage of the current plan, instead of saying that it will be fixed "later".

Basically, in the current underpass design there is no cycling infrastructure, just pedestrian infrastructure that cyclists are allowed to use. This is a huge step down from the current situation where meadow and charleston have their own bicycle lanes. Just like was done for car traffic there needs to be an analysis which answers the following questions:

- * What speed are you designing for? The current design features some serious (hairpin) curves that will force cyclists to slow down so much they become unstable.
- * What kind of bikes are you designing for? How are cargo bikes supposed to take the curves featured in the design? What about tricycles?
- * How are you going to make sure the intersections have good crossability for pedestrians and bicycles?
- * How many cyclists/hour are you designing for? Will the infrastructure be sufficient to promote and accommodate 10 percent of trips by bike as is a city of Palo Alto policy goal?

Again, instead of fixing it "later" it is important that a complete picture is presented to the community. For the other proposed designs it is easy to change details later on. However, due to space constraints it is not easy to fix the underpass design and it might add significant costs.

Kind regards,

Nicole, Arnout, and Ava Zoeller Boelens

From: [Glenn Fisher](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Grade Separation evaluation
Date: Monday, June 29, 2020 9:53:49 AM

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Hi, XCAP committee,

Again, thank you for the tremendous time and effort you've put into this process. I was please do see that you have updated the matrix for the new options. And I think they give a good picture of what should be recommended.

I took the liberty of assigning a numeric weight to your 6 options (blue to red) and used that to come up with a total "score" for each option. Of course, one could assign different weights to each criteria, but I chose to assume equal weighting for all of them. In addition, I assigned a score to the Design Exception (Engineering) criteria, based on my assumptions of realistic acceptance by CalTrain (none=6, very unlikely, like grade >1%=1).

To create a "Value" rating, I divided the cost by the score to get a cost weighted value for each option, where smaller is better. I attach my table.

The results are, I think, quite clear.

For S. Palo Alto (Meadow and Charleston), the Hybrid and Underpass have the same total score, but because of it's lower cost, Hybrid is a better option. While I personally prefer the viaduct, it's requirement of a 1.4% grade is likely to be a non-starter with CalTrain, making it a infeasible option. And the Underpass has significant issues with traffic flow.

For Churchill, the three options have very similar scores (51, 52, 53), but the best cost/value option is clearly the Underpass, with half the cost/value score of the viaduct. And, as a resident of a different part of the city, I strongly feel that the closure of Churchill does not comply with the Council's goal of facilitating cross-city communication and traffic.

By the way, I disagree with your assessment of S. Palo Alto cross-town movement as a "6" for the underpass: the lack of turning options (especially at Meadow) seems to me to rate this a 4 or 5 rather than a 6. Some of the other scores are also debatable, but this one seems clearly out of line.

Eval/Option	CRITERIA	MEADOW-CHARLESTON			CHURCHILL		
		Hybrid	Viaduct	Underpass	Closure	Viaduct	Underpass
A	x-town movement	6	6	6	2	6	6
B	Reduce vehicle delays	6	6	6	4	6	6
C	Ped/cycle route	6	6	6	6	5	6
D	support CalTrain	4	5	4	4	3	3
E	Finance	3	2	2	5	2	3
F	ROW acquisition	3	6	2	3	4	2
G	Noise & vibration	4	4	4	4	4	4
H	Access, reduce regional traffic	6	6	5	3	6	4
I	Visual changes	1	1	3	4	1	2
J	Construction	2	3	1	3	2	1
	Cost	200-250	400-400	350-450	50-65	300-400	160-200
	Score	41	45	39	38	39	37
	(Higher is better)						
	\$/score	5.49	10.00	10.26	1.51	8.97	4.86
	(Lower is better)						
ENGINEERING							
L	Water movement	2	3	2	2	3	2
M	Maintenance	2	3	2	2	3	2
N	Utility	2	3	1	2	3	1
O	RR impact	2	3	2	1	2	2
P	Veh impact	1	3	1	1	2	1
Q	Design Xcpt	3	1	6	6	1	6
	Design Xcpt	UC clearance	1.4% grade	none	none	1.6% grade	none
	Score	12	16	14	14	14	14
	(Higher is better)						
	TOTAL SCORE	53	61	53	52	53	51
	\$/score	4.25	6.97	7.55	1.11	6.60	3.53

From: [Teri Llach](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Misleading statements in Matrix Summaries Chart need to change ASAP
Date: Tuesday, June 30, 2020 3:11:01 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

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There are some language that needs to be fixed in the **Matrix Summaries Chart** that are misleading

Please fix the following to be fair as the partial underpass is devastating and will destroy homes and our neighborhood.

1) The matrix labels the first Churchill option as "CLOSURE", which is inherently wrong and misleading since:

- the Council's explicit approval of this option and all analysis of this option has ***always*** focused on analysis and consideration of the TRAFFIC MITIGATION OPTIONS proposed and analyzed at Emb Rd and O.E.
- all discussions of this option and the Mitigation Options are accompanied with a caveat on the unknown timing of IF/WHEN Churchill would need to be closed due to various traffic and safety issues related to train volume growth.
- In fact, the actual discussion elements in this matrix include the negative consequences of the Mitigation Options (Row F - ROW takings of parking on E. Churchill and \$\$\$ Row includes the cost of Mitigations)

Please change the misleading and illogical labeling of this option from "CLOSURE" TO "CLOSURE + TRAFFIC MITIGATIONS"

2) The suggestion that the resulting "Traffic" (Row A) would be so much worse with Closure + Mitigations is patently false. The traffic analysis done by Hexagon clearly demonstrates that the results would be net-net Better than today in all situations and at all 7x intersections studied.

- While it is true that direct access from Southgate Neighborhood to Alma will be gone and require an extra 1/4 mile of driving, that is already captured in row H (re: Neighborhood Access)
- Row A is all about Traffic Movement across the corridor, which the various studies demonstrate will be BETTER.

Please change the categorization of Row A in the first option as a shade of blue (better) not red (worse) to reflect the actual results of analysis.

-
It is not right for these characterizations to be misleading when the facts are clear – can you

make these changes ASAP

-

Thanks Teri

Teri Llach

p: 650-575-6913

w: www.terillach.com

e: llachteric@gmail.com



**Thomas W. Kellerman
Rachel H. Kellerman
1129 Emerson Street
Palo Alto, CA 94301**

June 30, 2020

Rail Expanded Community
Advisory Panel of Palo Alto

Re: Agenda Item #3 for July 1, 2020 Meeting

Dear Members:

We are writing with respect to the determination of the XCAP timeline and deliverables. We urge XCAP to weigh the following factors when deciding what kind of final report you will submit to the City Council, and to encourage you to choose options 1 or 2. Please consider the following:

1. Health and social justice issues are of urgent concern to the community so it is not possible to engage citizens in a meaningful way at this time. Indeed some residents might think it is not appropriate to continue to spend precious city and Council resources on a future infrastructure project when there are so many other pressing economic concerns.
2. Caltrain is changing the way it is approaching the grade crossing process. Shouldn't any recommendations follow these new guidelines?
3. Important stakeholders such as the bicycle community still need to weigh in on plans. Plans that are lacking important input will not be well received by the community, especially in a virtual setting.
4. Given Council's heavy agenda and the budget crisis, it is not clear whether Council intends to adopt any proposals this year. It does not make sense for the XCAP to make specific recommendations if the Council doesn't intend to act on them at this time.

We appreciate the time and effort put into this project by all of the XCAP members and we believe the foregoing alternatives represent the most useful input at this time.

Sincerely,

Thomas W. Kellerman
Rachel H. Kellerman

cc: Ed Shikada, City Manager

From: [Kellerman, Thomas W.](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [Shikada, Ed](#); [Rachel and Tom Kellerman](#)
Subject: XCAP Submission for July 1, 2020 Meeting
Date: Tuesday, June 30, 2020 6:53:03 PM
Attachments: [XCAP letter June 30 2020.docx](#)

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Please see the attached submission

Thomas W. Kellerman

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From: [Susan Newman](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Comments on Matrix
Date: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 12:03:04 PM

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Dear XCAP,

I've made some notes on the current version of the matrices that you might look at:

1. South Palo Alto:

- Underpass, Item C: It's not clear to me why the underpass as currently conceived receives a dark blue rating, given the qualifications about cyclists having to cross the road to join a two-way bike lane. Doesn't that introduce opportunities for bike-car interactions that might be dangerous, especially at peak traffic hours?
- Hybrid and Viaduct, Item E: Why should we anticipate that "a substantial portion of capital costs" will be covered by regional, state, and federal sources for the hybrid but not for the viaduct? It's not obvious why one can be funded from outside sources but not the other. Given the changes to residential properties (driveway modifications) required by the hybrid vs. none for the viaduct, I would have expected that more local funding would be required for that option. Also, won't this depend on the guidelines and policies developed by Caltrain for grade separations at large?
- Underpass, Item G: Shouldn't this item include how additional noise on the train bridge will be mitigated? (I know we're waiting on revisions to the Noise and Vibration study.)
- All options, Item G: Should the impact of vibration be included for all options?
- All options, Item G, mitigations: Should all the options read "will be mitigated" rather than "can be mitigated"?
- Underpass, Item H: Why does mode separation significantly improve pedestrian and cyclist access to neighborhoods, etc? Alternatives like trench, hybrid and viaduct that preserve and allow for improvements to existing bike and pedestrian pathways seem to accomplish this access as well. It's perhaps implied by the dark blue color of given to the viaduct, hybrid, and trench, but the wording gives the impression that only vehicular traffic is being considered, especially when effects on bike/ped traffic are called out in the Underpass case. Also, given the slopes/grades on the bike/ped underpasses, isn't access for older and less fit cyclists and pedestrians actually reduced in the Underpass case?
- Viaduct, Item J: Obviously, construction of any alternative will be disruptive and perhaps noisy, but I'm struck that an option that has "minimal road closures (nights/weekends only and will take only two years to construct" doesn't at least warrant a light blue when compared to others that require street closures, lane reductions, and 2-3 times as much time.
- Viaduct, Items L, N, and O: Similar comment here: Doesn't an option that avoids creek/drainage impacts, utility relocations, and temporary tracks deserve a blue for these items?

2. Churchill:

- Partial Underpass, Item A: It pains me to say it, but I don't think it makes sense to give both the Viaduct and the PU the top-rated dark blue fill, given that the viaduct allows all movements for all modes of traffic and the PU eliminates some car movements and diverts bike and pedestrian traffic a block away.
- Viaduct, Item A: I'm not sure what is meant by "Viaduct provides opportunities for additional crossings for all modes." Presumably, the viaduct would improve car traffic flow... The viaduct would also allow the city to change the light at Churchill/Alma so that bikes and peds could cross with all traffic stopped... But if these changes are what is meant, perhaps they should be included in the matrix.
- Closure, Item B: I question the light blue rating and the claim that the impact on traffic throughout the road network in the area can be mitigated, in spite of Gary's strong claims. The number of issues with data, methodology, and behavioral assumptions that surfaced concerning the traffic study at both XCAP and City Council, together with the narrow focus of the study, suggests that the mitigation claim may be optimistic. At a minimum, the matrix should mention some uncertainty.
- All options, Item C: The matrix should include possible impacts on older and less fit cyclists and pedestrians of diverting bike/ped traffic to underground routes in Closure and the PU. As Greg Braille pointed out at the last meeting, many cyclists disagree that they are safer in a tunnel than on a well-marked street. Also, in the case of the viaduct, the possibility of creating safer crossings by changes to the traffic light schedule to allow bike/ped only crossings at Alma/Churchill should be mentioned. I'm not sure what this does to the color coding.
- Viaduct, Item D: Is there any possibility of mentioning and taking into account the possibility, verified repeatedly by Etty of AECOM, that the Viaduct could be constructed without shoofly tracks by moving the train closer to the street, away from the properties along the west side of the corridor?
- All options, Item E: Again, why does closure receive a substantial portion of capital costs from regional, state, and federal sources, while the viaduct does not? Similarly, why are capital costs for the PU substantially covered by outside funding while the viaduct costs are not?
- Viaduct, Item F: If avoiding property takings is such a high priority for Palo Alto, why does "no acquisition of private properties" receive a light blue rather than a dark blue?
- All options, Item G: see comments for South Palo Alto alternatives: 1) use "will be mitigated" and mention specific method; 2) consider including vibration effects in matrix.
- Closure, Item H: Again, the ratings and comments make the mitigations at Embarcadero/Alma seem better at maintaining "access to neighborhoods, parks, and schools along the corridor" than most residents who have examined the plan closely think it will. As for "reducing regional traffic on neighborhood streets," closure will certainly accomplish that for west Churchill, but it is very unclear that closure and its mitigations will have the same effect on other neighborhood streets throughout the traffic network.
- All options, Item H: Diversion or lack of diversion of regional traffic isn't clearly related to the goal of maintaining access to neighborhoods, parks, and schools. Is it possible that "reducing regional traffic on neighborhood streets" should be considered separately from "maintaining access to neighborhoods, parks, and schools along the corridor". The two things may (sometimes, always?) be at odds and that should be

shown graphically.

- Closure, Item I: This seems like the main advantage to closure — preventing visual changes. Shouldn't it receive a dark blue? Although perhaps if/when sound walls area added to reduce train noise, those will create significant visual changes...
- Viaduct, Item I: The assignment of dark red to this cell seems to encode the deep fear and prejudice that many (but not all) residents have against the viaduct as a visual travesty. It does not reflect the possibility of creative landscaping to soften the view. Perhaps shift to one of the orange colors?
- Partial Underpass, Item I: The description of visual impacts here would benefit from some additional work. For example, would it be worth mentioning the deep dip of Churchill West as a visual change? Also should the visual effects of noise mitigations be included? Perhaps removal of overhead poles on the east side of Alma could be separated out as a plus? Might the city consider landscaping options to mitigate the loss of the "mature trees" on the planting strip?
- Viaduct, Item J: According to Etty, it would be possible (though not less expensive) to build the viaduct piecemeal and move it closer to Alma in such a way as to avoid a shoofly track. Would it be possible to discuss this possibility somewhere? If this possibility is included, it will have effects on other cells in the matrix, like Item O.
- Closure, Item J: In all fairness, I think closure warrants at least a light blue here.
- Viaduct, Items L and N: Again, I'm struck by the fact that the engineering challenges section doesn't have any blue. Given the importance to the environment and to maintenance requirements of avoiding effects on creeks and drainage, doesn't the viaduct deserve at least a light blue, if not better? Ditto with regard to utilities impacts (though I'd give it a slightly less positive color than for creeks/drainage).

General comments: This exercise brought out for me how little I really understand the issue of funding and its sources after following this process pretty closely for 2+ years. I do hope the XCAP can devote a session to discussing this, uncovering uncertainties and probabilities, before the final report is written.

Susan Newman
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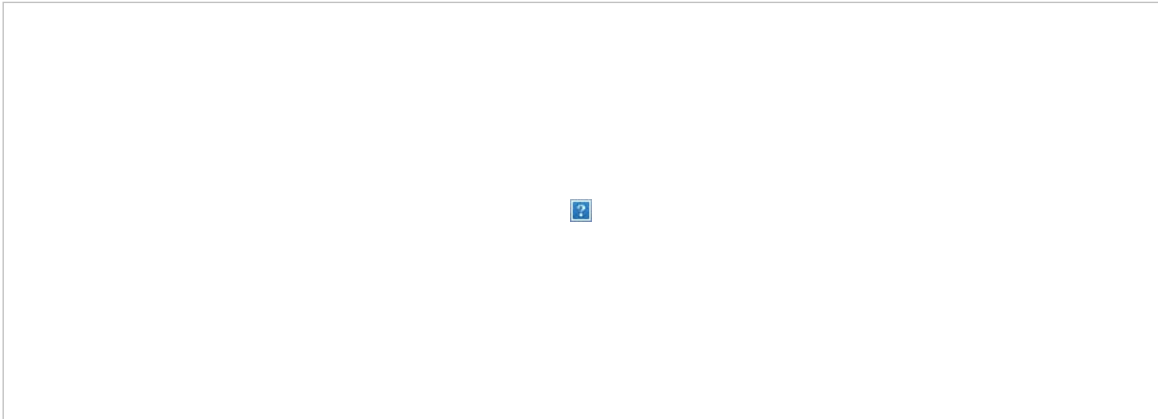
From: [Nadia Naik](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Fwd: Caltrain Electrification Construction Notice - Churchill Avenue Closure: July 6-8
Date: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 9:59:32 AM

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FYI

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Caltrain Modernization Project** <calmod@caltrain.com>
Date: Wed, Jul 1, 2020 at 9:16 AM
Subject: Caltrain Electrification Construction Notice - Churchill Avenue Closure: July 6-8
To: Nadia Naik <nadianaik@gmail.com>

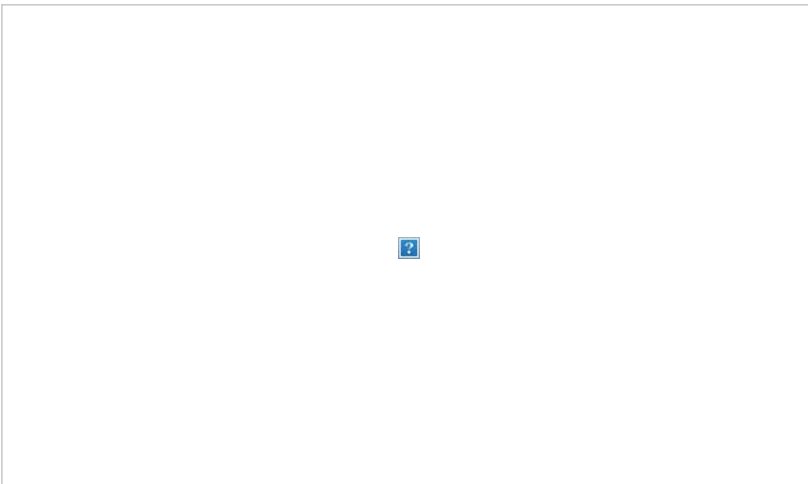


Hello,

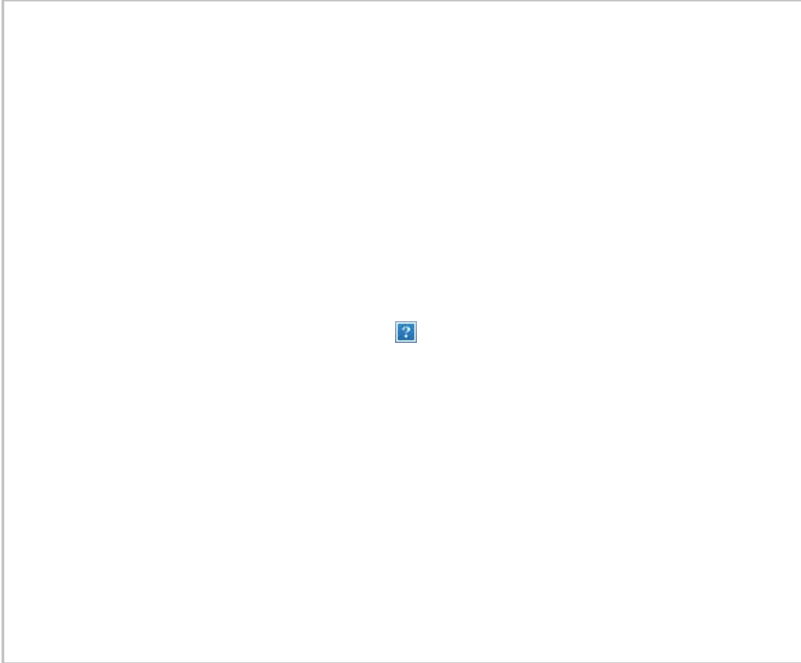
Caltrain Electrification crews will be installing foundations in Palo Alto that will require the temporary closure of the Churchill Avenue railroad crossing. The Churchill Avenue railroad crossing will be closed from from 8 p.m. on July 6 to 5 a.m. on July 7, and 8 p.m. on July 7 to 5 a.m. on July 8.

Illuminated and directional signs will direct vehicle traffic to use Embarcadero Road for the northern detour route and Page Mill Road/Oregon Expressway for the southern detour route on the night of the closure. Pedestrians and bicyclists will be directed to use the Homer Avenue tunnel or the California Street tunnel at Bowden Park during construction. During construction, crews will provide crossing access to Emergency First Responders. Detour maps are provided below.

NORTH DETOUR ROUTE (NORTH OF CHURCHILL AVENUE)



SOUTH DETOUR ROUTE (SOUTH OF CHURCHILL AVENUE)



CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES

Work will consist of excavation, placement of rebar, concrete fill, electrical grounding and the installation of foundations. Crews will utilize on-track equipment that requires the temporary closure of the Churchill Avenue railroad crossing. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and the field team will work as quietly as possible. Please visit our website at www.calmod.org/get-involved to sign-up for weekly construction updates. If you have questions or comments about the upcoming work, please call our dedicated Project Hotline at 650.399.9659 or email calmod@caltrain.com. Thank you for your patience and understanding.



Caltrain · United States

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From: [Mohamed T. Hadidi](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [youngjoh](#); [Omar Hadidi](#); [Mohamed Hadidi](#)
Subject: XCAP Meeting on July 1, 2020 - Grade Separation at Churchill
Date: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 10:24:42 AM

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Dear XCAP members,

We live in the Southgate area.

Once more, we would like to thank you for all your dedication and hard work.

First, we would like to pick up on a comment made at the last XCAP meeting, namely that the grade separation projects could possibly be funded by a massive nationwide infrastructure program that has bipartisan support and has become more urgent post COVID-19. If that is a serious possibility, we would like to urge the XCAP to recommend to the City Council to keep a citywide and perhaps a Bay Area-wide TUNNEL as a candidate for funding by such an infrastructure program. As has been repeatedly emphasized, all of the solutions under consideration are compromises because we are working under the hard constraint of a limited space. Only the tunnel provides an almost perfect solution for the next 100 years; its main drawback being its order of magnitude higher cost.

If we have to contend with cost, then for the Churchill crossing, our family strongly favors CLOSURE with mitigations at Embarcadero & Oregon Expressway and a bike/pedestrian underpass. We also strongly oppose the 2 other proposed alternatives, namely the Partial Underpass and the Viaduct. We support CLOSURE because of cost, safety, traffic-friendliness, and to preserve the character of our neighborhood which would be gravely compromised and threatened by both the Partial Underpass and the Viaduct, both of which would be eyesores and visual blots on the landscape.

Finally, regarding the Matrix Summaries relating to Churchill, we would like to suggest the following changes:

1. Change the Option Label "Closure" to "Closure + Mitigations" to accurately describe this option. Almost all rows of the matrix under this option, including Cost at the bottom, reflect the mitigations that are part and parcel of this option.
2. Change the color of the first Row (Row A) to light blue to reflect Hexagon Traffic Analysis showing improved traffic at all intersections.

Thank you for your consideration and we warmly wish you all a wonderful and safe Fourth of July.

With our best regards,
Mohamed Hadidi, Young-Jeh Oh, Omar Hadidi