

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 **July 1 and July 8, 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: pellson@pacbell.net
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [Mesterhazy, Rosie](#); [Star-Lack, Sylvia](#); [Kamhi, Philip](#); [Phillips, Peter](#); [Pflasterer, Jim](#)
Subject: Kellogg vs. Seale
Date: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 2:11:34 PM

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

Why was Kellogg, rather than Seale, chosen as the bike/ped crossing in the latest Churchill alternative? Please note the Walk & Roll map <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/66847> for Walter Hays Elementary School (which also shows Greene Middle School).

Seale is an existing school commute route. A Seale crossing would provide children from the west side of the tracks who attend Hays and Greene with a convenient and safe connector to their neighborhood elementary and middle schools. It would also serve Palo Alto High School quite nicely.

A Seale crossing could land children on the west side of the tracks in Peers Park on an off-road trail that connects to a bike boulevard and Paly. On the east side of tracks it would land on an existing school commute route. It would do this without necessitating a longer tunnel and underground U-turn with poor sight lines.

Thanks for considering this comment.

Penny Ellson



Virus-free. www.avg.com

From: [Mel Kronick](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#); [Council, City](#)
Cc: [Mel Kronick](#); [Karen Kronick](#)
Subject: Palo Alto Grade Separation Decision
Date: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 9:15:32 PM

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

Dear XCAP Committee and City Council,

As long-time residents of the Crescent Park area who regularly crosses the CalTrain tracks, I urge you to move forward with speed to select 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 to proceed under the tracks, rather than closing Churchill. In my experience traveling to other destinations in Palo Alto, Embarcadero is already heavily overused and closing traffic on Churchill will adversely affect local neighborhoods as well as significantly impacting my travel time.

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 provide more alternatives for travel and turning from Alma to cross streets, which preserves Alma as a major cross-town route.

Thank you,

Mel and Karen Kronick
1156 Forest Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94301

From: [Eduardo F. Llach](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: XCAP - Please make a recommendation - Add ROW to Churchill Underpass :)
Date: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 2:00:31 PM

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

Hi XCAP members, Thank you for the great work. I've read the documents distributed and your letter to the City Council. Thank you.

Please opt to **make a recommendation** to the City Council.

You are all 100X more informed than they are and we will be able to move the ball forward vs keep passing it back and forth. The people on Churchill, Meadow and Charleston need some level of closure re: what's going to happen to our streets so we can make decisions re: what's next for us and our neighborhoods.

I read the Matrix Summaries (great work) – on page 4 under the Churchill Underpass it says 'No Caltrain design exceptions needed' yet it should say '**Right Of Way needed from Caltrain**'

Can we rename **Closure** on page 3 and 4 of the Matrix Summaries to **Traffic Mitigation & Closure** ? since a significant portion of the work are the city way traffic mitigations vs the closure of Churchill.

As an analogy: In a bacon and egg breakfast, the chicken is involved, the pig is **committed**. Families who live on Churchill, Meadow and Charleston are **committed**, everyone else is involved. We are going to live with your decisions every day of our lives in our homes on those streets. I know you are aware and sensitive.

I'm for the Oregon, Embarcadero mitigations + Churchill closure since it helps the whole city vs just a subset of people, it is safer, cost effective and has the least amount of construction disturbances to everyone in the area.

Thank you, Eduardo

Eduardo F. Llach
Cel – 650 678 1406

From: [Robert Neff](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [Robert Neff](#)
Subject: XCAP Feedback for June 1 Meeting Item 4.
Date: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 6:12:03 PM

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

Dear XCAP members,

My name is Robert Neff, I am a long time resident and cyclist, living in South Palo Alto, and a member of PABAC..

Here is a longer text reflecting my comments today regarding the current plans.

First regarding the proposed bike/ped undercrossing at Kellogg, in the Churchill plans. Why at Kellogg? That would be close to the existing bike/ped underpass at Embarcadero, and of limited additional utility to the city-wide bicycle and pedestrian networks.

Earlier in the grade separation process there was a proposal to add a bike/ped underpass at Seale, connecting to Peers Park. This would be of much higher benefit to the city, as it would serve school commute routes to both Greene and Paly, and it could be an excellent alternative to the crowded and sub-standard California Ave underpass. A new underpass of similar design could be constructed at either location. When this new underpass is built, we should put it in the best location.

Second, regarding the new underpass plans for Meadow and Charleston, these are incomplete in their design for cyclists and pedestrians. Many aspects are left to the viewers imagination, especially the route that bike/ped traffic will take, from both sides of the street to the side with the cycletrack, and back. It is obvious that the plans break the existing bicycle connectivity, but not clear how this is fixed in the plans. For example, the plan at Meadow shows simple crosswalks for this west-bound bicycle traffic. This is inadequate and unsafe. To make the design as safe as the streets are now, the plans must include two new active traffic signals on Meadow, at Emerson and at 2nd street to stop auto traffic and allow bicycles to safely cross. HAWK signals, adapted for bikes, could be used. These traffic signals are not in the plans yet.

Charleston is even more incomplete, especially east of Alma.

Third, for the hybrid and viaduct plans with all streets at grade, all should have exemplary bike lanes. 5 feet is the absolute minimum, 6 feet is better, and for Charleston, 8 feet of space for a buffered lane under the tracks is the way to go. Please don't let these plans skimp on width for bike lanes.

Thank you for your work for our city of Palo Alto.

Robert Neff

Emerson Street near Loma Verde

From: rapurkey@aol.com
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Agenda item 4.a, July 1, 2020 meeting
Date: Friday, July 3, 2020 4:32:29 PM

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

Dear XCAP members,

I am writing to offer comments on the draft Summary of Evaluation matrix ("Matrix") discussed under Agenda item 4.a in your July 1, 2020 XCAP meeting, in particular, those portions that address the options for the Churchill crossing. The Matrix does not reflect the extensive work done in recent months to refine and expand the scope of the Closure option. Consequently it does not accurately reflect the evaluation of the Closure option against the Council's criteria and in comparison with the other options for the Churchill crossing. Most importantly, traffic studies demonstrate that closure of Churchill to vehicle traffic with proposed mitigations will in fact improve movement of all modes across the corridor. The language in the Matrix should be modified in Row A to reflect the mitigation measures now included in the option, and the impact color for the Closure option in Row A should be changed to dark blue. Other changes to the Matrix should be considered to insure that the language comparing the options across each evaluation criteria is used consistently.

From the beginning, proposals to close Churchill have included building a pedestrian/bike underpass to maintain foot and bicycle transit of the rail crossing. In this respect, the word "closure" to describe the option has always been a misnomer. The option is in fact only a partial closure, closing the Churchill crossing to vehicular traffic while constructing a grade separated underpass for pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Costs and engineering challenges to construct the undercrossing are referenced elsewhere in the Matrix. The language in Row A for both the Viaduct and Partial Underpass options make explicit reference to creating grade separation for pedestrian and bicycle modes, while the language for the Closure option is silent as to these modes of transportation. The language for the Closure option in Row A should be modified to explicitly address these modes of transportation. One possibility would be to add the following: "Pedestrian/bike traffic will be grade separated from the railroad, or both railroad and vehicle traffic, via an undercrossing at Churchill." The XCAP should consider renaming the entire option from "Closure" to "Vehicle Closure" or "Vehicle Closure with Mitigations" to reflect the current scope of all measures currently encompassed by the option.

Mitigation measures to improve the intersections of Embarcadero and Oregon Expressway at Alma and El Camino have been identified and studied extensively for the Closure option. The cost of those mitigation measures is included in the Matrix in the \$50 to \$65 million estimate shown in the "Order of Magnitude Cost" estimate shown in Row K and in the various engineering challenges. To ensure consistency in presenting the option against the various Council evaluation criteria and comparison between the options, these mitigations should be reflected in the language in Row A. Language should be added in Row A to reflect the mitigations, such as "Makes

improvements to nearby arterial intersections."

The application of the color orange in Row A under the Closure option should also be changed to reflect the mitigation measures and their impact on facilitating movement across the corridor. While extensive analysis has been done to identify improvements to the arterials to handle the regional vehicle traffic now carried on Churchill, the conclusions of these studies is not reflected in the impact shading in Row A. Traffic analysis demonstrates that the combined effect of the proposed mitigation measures actually improves vehicle traffic flow across the corridor. As noted above, pedestrian and bike transportation will be grade separated as is the case with the other options. Accordingly, the color shading for the Closure option in Row A should be changed to the same shade of blue of the other two options.

The combined effect of the changes I have suggested modifies the language in Row A for the Closure option to read as follows: "Churchill Ave will be closed to vehicles at the railroad tracks. Pedestrian/bike traffic will be grade separated from the railroad, or both railroad and vehicle traffic, via an undercrossing at Churchill. Makes improvements to nearby arterial intersections." (Underline indicates added language.) In addition, the shading in Row A for the Closure option should be changed from orange to dark blue. Changing the name of the option to "Vehicle Closure with Mitigations" should also be considered.

Before finalizing, the language in the Matrix across rows should be reviewed and revised to ensure consistency in language and issues addressed, as language added for the newer options has introduced some inconsistencies. For example, the first sentences of the three Churchill options in Row B use consistent language in describing the options effects on delay and congestion at rail crossings. But the last sentence under the Partial Underpass adds the issue of the effect of mode separation due to its planned pedestrian undercrossing on vehicle traffic congestion. If the effect of mode separation on vehicle congestion at rail crossings is significant to evaluating the options on this criteria, then language should be added to the other two options addressing the same issue. If not, then the language on this issue should be dropped in the Partial Underpass Option cell. Another example is the language in Row C relating to safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists. Both the Closure and Partial Underpass options call for a pedestrian/bicycle undercrossing, with the difference being where the undercrossing is located. The second sentence under the Partial Underpass could be deleted, and the words ". . . with the undercrossing relocated to Kellogg Ave" added to the first sentence to simplify and clarify the differences. Similarly in Row H under the Partial Underpass option, the last sentence states, "Pedestrian and cyclist access will significantly improve due to mode separation." The same is true, at least in part, of both of the other Churchill options. If the effect of mode separation on delay and congestion is significant when evaluating the options on this criteria, then language addressing the issue should be included in the other two options. If not, this language should be deleted in the Partial Underpass option.

Finally, I question the color coding in Row H of the Churchill crossing options. The intent of this criteria is to assess the effects on access across the corridor on schools and other locations "while reducing regional traffic on neighborhood streets."

(Underlining added) The existing configuration of Churchill creates a cut-through option that allows regional vehicle traffic to route through neighborhood streets in Evergreen Park and Old Palo Alto. The Closure with Mitigations option routes this regional traffic to the arterials that are intended to carry regional vehicle traffic. The Viaduct and Partial Underpass options encourage the continuation and increase in regional traffic through these neighborhood streets. Color coding the Closure option light orange, while coloring the other two options some shade of blue is simply mystifying. The color coding of the Closure option in Row H should be changed to some shade of blue.

Thanks you for your consideration, and all of the hard work you have been doing on behalf of our community in these challenging times.

Sincerely,

Richard Purkey
Tennyson Ave, Palo Alto

From: [Ken Joye](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [Kamhi, Philip](#); [Bhatia, Ripon](#)
Subject: input regarding 1 July meeting agenda, HSR
Date: Saturday, July 4, 2020 10:35:07 AM

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

I watched the livestream of the 1 July 2020 XCAP meeting and was able to make a very brief comment regarding agenda item #4 at the end of the session. I offer you some more thoughts here, in addition to a question about High-Speed Rail.

To address the latter first: the HSR Authority has announced the comment period for the San Francisco-San Jose draft EIR and published a [fact sheet](#) describing that project section. Should XCAP attempt to weigh any of the HSR issues when it does its deliberations? I am prompted to ask this because that fact sheet includes a bullet item about “curve straightening along the tracks”, making me wonder whether any of the alternatives before the XCAP might be incompatible with HSR engineering concerns (not that I think that curve straightening is specifically an issue at Churchill, Meadow or Charleston).

Regarding the "Updated matrix and discussion of responses to comments on layouts, renderings and fact sheets" item at the latest meeting, I would like to make a couple of general and a few specific observations.

A number of panel members made statements about the provenance of the matrix (“this is not our work”), but I would point out that versions of it have already been distributed to the public under the name of the XCAP. Your panel may wish to disavow the ranking given to various Council evaluation criteria but in the interest of transparency I urge you to publish your analog for public comment. You almost certainly should use a tool such as that consultant/staff ranked matrix to come to a recommendation to the City Council and make clear the weighting of the criteria you chose to make that recommendation. One of the people who made public comments, Susan Newman, clearly expressed the need for “rigor” in this regard and I echo her sentiments.

Note: in a previous message to XCAP, I asked how the Meadow/Charleston Underpass alternative would compare to others in the matrix; the URL I included in that message was to the version of the matrix in place at the time I drafted it, though an updated version was posted by the time I actually sent my message

If I may, I would like to suggest that when the XCAP considers its weighted criteria, I hope that each member who was opposed to property acquisitions at Churchill will take the same position for the Meadow/Charleston alternatives.

Also, though you are examining conceptual plans at this point and claim that you are not examining them at the design level, I ask that you do not make a recommendation to Council which precludes a **feasible** design for all users.

One specific point I would like to make in writing is that which I mentioned in my oral statement: consultant responses to the earlier discussion of the fact sheets included the terms “subtle improvements” (pg 4-of-4) and “limits of what was studied” (pg 2-of-4). Those responses ignore the fact that other alternatives don’t have a 2-way bike/ped ramp and attempting to address that in the design phase may be untenable.

I question whether any shading of cell L3 on [Matrix](#) pg 2-of-4 is appropriate: if the Viaduct alternative has no Creek/Drainage Impacts, then that cell should be shaded light blue or left unshaded.

The dark blue shading of cell C3 on [Matrix](#) pg 1-of-4 is inappropriate, due to the need to access the ramp. The 2-way bike/ped ramp is separate from motor vehicles but as drawn in the conceptual plans access to it is not safe nor do the convoluted movements to access the ramp make that a “clear” option.

There is inconsistency in the shading for alternatives between Churchill and Meadow/Charleston: the text for cell F3 on [Matrix](#) pg 1-of-4 and cell F2 pg 3-of-4 is essentially the same, but the two cells do not have the same color of blue shading (“*No acquisition of private properties is required*” vs “*No acquisition of private properties will be required*”).

Thank you for your consideration of this input and for your service to the community,
Ken Joye
PABAC chair

From: [Gary Lindgren](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Is There an Elephant in the Room
Date: Saturday, July 4, 2020 1:58:54 PM

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

Hello XCAP Committee,

I'm getting the idea that there is an elephant in the room that no one notices or wants to notice. This elephant is the priority given to property acquisition. At the July first meeting, Cari mentioned that a priority scale would be useful for the "Evaluation Criteria" in the "Matrix Summaries." It seems that any property acquisition is something that must be avoided above other criteria. The reason I bring this up is that the underpass solution for Meadow now on the table has many problems. The chief issue is that only 3 out of 8 possible turns at Meadow and Alma are allowed. To me this is not a workable intersection. Churchill is in much the same with the Partial Underpass concept. I'm an optimist and believe that giving up a foot can gain 100 feet, if you understand my metaphor. Please bring up the role property acquisition is playing in the design and selection of rail grade separation solutions in a future XCAP meeting.

Take Care and Thank You for All Your Hard Work,
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/>

[Check Out Latest Seismometer Reading](#)

@garyelindgren

[Listen to Radio Around the World](#)

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