

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 27 and August 12, 2020 at 12:00 pm approximately.**



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: [Roland Lebrun](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Caltrain Tax Measure update
Date: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 4:56:36 PM

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

The language that will be voted on next week will be identical to what passed in San Francisco yesterday:

SFMTA Friday July 31st
SCC BOS Tuesday August 4th
SMC BOS (last call) Tuesday August 4
SamTrans (last call) Wednesday August 5th
Caltrain Board Thursday August 6th AM
VTA Board Thursday August 6th PM

From: [Susan Newman](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Comments on the Safety Report
Date: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 2:48:40 PM

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Dear XCAP members,

The draft safety report raises a number of issues and concerns that I think you should take into account in editing and adding to the final report.

First, a question: **Who actually wrote the Safety report?** The author identifies themselves as "a former editor for the first technical manual for the National Violent Death Reporting System, Centers For Disease Control and Prevention" but I don't see a name.

The other, even more pressing concern, is the **absence of actual reasons for the recommendations**. Authorities are cited, but I imagine one could find other authorities who would disagree. If the report lays out the **reasoning behind the recommendations**, it will be much more likely to be accepted. I discuss potential objections to a few specific recommendations as examples:

The **author recommends closure as the safest option, but without explaining the reasons**. The call for a number of additions to a track left at grade to prevent anyone crossing the tracks belies the idea that it is inherently safer to close intersection while leaving the tracks at grade than to separate the road and railway grades.

The **language about the viaduct seems simply biased**. The author calls it "**this dangerous rail crossing**" with no accompanying justification. As a community reader, it's not intuitively obvious why elevating the train 20 feet above ground, with 6-foot sound walls on either side of the train, would not make it difficult-to-impossible for kids intent on suicide to throw themselves on the track, as well as protect all modes of traffic from interaction with the train. It's not even clear to me why you would also need the anti-climbing fence if there are no other means of accessing the tracks. If there are other means of accessing the tracks (stairs, e.g.,) I can't imagine why these wouldn't be locked in some way to prevent access by anyone other than authorized personnel.

In support of the perception of bias, I ask: If the **viaduct is so dangerous, why doesn't the author use the same language in discussing the hybrid** at Meadow/Charleston?

Obviously there is **no analysis of the Partial Underpass designs**.

I hope that you will consider rectifying these problems to make the Safety section of your final report more understandable and acceptable to the public.

best,
Susan

Susan Newman
1523 Portola Avenue
Palo Alto CA 94306
650.473.1811 (h)
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snewman@workpractice.com
snewzy@gmail.com

From: [J Stinson](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Fact sheet Funding Evaluation
Date: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 10:50:05 AM

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

Dear XCAP members,
Thank you all again for your hard work over the past year!

I wanted to call attention to an error in the "fact sheet" info provided at the connectingpaloalto.com site. The "Evaluation with City Council-Adopted Criteria" section of each of the three sheets covering the Churchill Crossing for the "Finance with feasible funding sources" summary is in error:
[Closure+Mitigation](#): The closure would require lower levels of local funding, with a substantial portion of capital costs covered by Regional, State and Federal sources.
[Viaduct](#): The viaduct would require substantial local funding resources significantly above the closure alternative.
[Partial Underpass](#) (Churchill section): The underpasses would require lower levels of local funding, substantial portion of the capital costs would be covered by regional, state and federal sources.

As I'm sure you're aware, the Closure+Mitigation projection is \$50-65M, Viaduct is \$300-400M and Partial Underpass is \$160-200M. It does not make sense that the funding summary is identical for both the Closure+Mitigation and the Partial Underpass. The Closure+Mitigation is over 3x lower cost than the Partial Underpass (which is less than 1/2 the cost of the Viaduct).

Also, I would highly recommend that the Closure+Mitigation fact sheet title be updated from "Closure" (current) to "Closure + Mitigations", since that is more accurate. It might also be good to expand on a third page the details on the Embarcadero & Oregon Expwy mitigations.

Thanks,
Jason Stinson

From: [Adrian Brandt](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Fwd: Viaduct LOS & advantages (was Re: Reduced turning movements have better LOS?)
Date: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 3:23:06 PM

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

Dear XCAP staff:

With this email, I am merely forwarding the attached email thread to the official XCAP@CityOfPaloAlto.org mailbox as it appears it was not included in the officially-published public email comments published to the XCAP website.

Thanks,
Adrian

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

From: **Adrian Brandt** <adrian.brandt@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Jul 27, 2020 at 9:52 AM
Subject: Viaduct LOS & advantages (was Re: Reduced turning movements have better LOS?)
To: Tony Carrasco <tony@carrasco.com>
Cc: Adina Levin <alevin@alevin.com>, Cari Templeton <cari@caritempleton.com>, Chantal Gaines <Chantal.Gaines@cityofpaloalto.org>, David Shen <dshen.nopa@gmail.com>, Ed Shikeda <Ed.Shikada@cityofpaloalto.org>, Ety Mercurio <etty.mercurio@aecom.com>, Gregory Brail <greg@brail.org>, Inyoung Cho <inyoungcho0@gmail.com>, Judy Kleinberg <Judy@paloaltochamber.com>, Kieth Reckdahl <reckdahl@yahoo.com>, Larry Klein <Lklein40@gmail.com>, Megan Kanne <mkanneXCAP@gmail.com>, Millette Litzinger <millette.litzinger@aecom.com>, Nadia Naik <nadianaik@gmail.com>, Patricia Lau <patlau2010@gmail.com>, Phil Burton <philburton.pagradecrossings@gmail.com>, Tony Carrasco <tony@carrasco.com>, Transportation Palo Alto <transportation@cityofpaloalto.org>

Hi Tony & XCAPpers,

Tony, you wrote:

I think the twelve turn intersection under the viaduct is at LOS D because it is attracting traffic that would have cut through neighborhoods with other alternatives. Gary said that it should not be attracting traffic from other major intersections in the vicinity.

"Attracting traffic" seems like curious framing to me.

Rather than "attracting traffic," I would say that the Churchill viaduct — unlike alternatives that eliminate movements — **preserves** the ability to maintain **all** of today's movements, and so does not drive certain trips or traffic away and/or cause as much neighborhood cut-through from motorists "working around" or compensating for eliminated movements.

I think the absurdity of downgrading the viaduct based on lower predicted LOS is illustrated by the fact that its predicted LOS could/would be made exactly the same as the more hobbled

alternatives by statutorily eliminating (with traffic signals, striping & signage) the same movements the others would eliminate!

It seems a bit ironic that the most movement-preserving alternative — the one leaving the most options open to city traffic engineers — is receiving a lower predicted LOS based on the assumption that the city will and must permit every movement it preserves or allows, which is simply not the case! The Churchill viaduct in fact merely allows/preserves the most movements — all of which the city may (or may not!) want to allow for reasons of LOS, neighborhood concerns/preferences, and bike/ped safety (the traffic light controller could even be programmed to provide an exclusive bike/ped cycle during “peak” Paly High traffic periods, allowing for safe, easy at-grade crossing while stopping all potentially dangerous vehicle traffic).

The viaduct imposes no permanent new, unnatural, or out-of-the-way or convoluted detours or grades or tunnels or bridges on cars, bikes or peds (everyone gets to stay at-grade, yay!), no weird new highway-style underpasses with concrete walls & ramps, no property-takings, while getting the tracks and trains completely up and out of the way of life and cross-right-of-way physical and visual community connectivity ... a big win for the community at large all for the permanent “cost” of having a visible from the backyards of only 23 track-adjacent Mariposa Ave. homes ... until they can mostly screen it from view with vines, shrubbery, and trees. Recall also, the viaduct slopes back to grade on either side of its highest point of ~20 feet at Churchill ... so by the time it reaches the 23rd home (1677 Mariposa) at 1,500 feet south of Churchill, it is already substantially lower on retained fill at only 10 feet above grade (see [profile](#)) ... and has returned to its essentially original grade past Peers Park.

As I see it, the biggest and obvious viaduct disadvantage is its significantly higher estimated cost. If it can be afforded, among the remaining alternatives it is the clear winner with the least permanent impacts by far for the largest number of community stakeholders.

Also, the viaduct could easily be 5 to 6 feet lower since AECOM is not assuming a [U-shaped bridge](#) over Churchill. As [this diagram](#) clearly shows, because it is so much thinner, such a bridge would allow for the entire viaduct to be at least 5 or 6 feet lower, eliminating the need for the envisioned need for a 1.6% Caltrain grade exception and/or allow for significantly shorter "ramping distance" on either side of Churchill, and of course, significantly-reduced visual impact on Mariposa Ave homes.

Regards,
Adrian

On Sunday, July 26, 2020, Tony Carrasco <tony@carrasco.com> wrote:

Adrian,

I think the twelve turn intersection under the viaduct is at LOS D because it is attracting traffic that would have cut through neighborhoods with other alternatives. Gary said that it should not be attracting traffic from other major intersections in the vicinity.

On Sun, Jul 26, 2020 at 12:37 PM Adrian Brandt <adrian.brandt@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi XCAP'ers:

I'm just now watching your July 22 meeting video.

Since Gary Black's explained the viaduct had poorer LOS ratings due to the fact that it doesn't eliminate as many turning movements as the alternatives with better LOS ratings.

There is a logic problem here.

It would be very easy to eliminate (prohibit) the same turn movements with the viaduct if the goal was merely to have better LOS ratings.

In fact, to highlight the absurdity of ranking the viaduct lower on LOS due to the turning movements it does not preclude ... you could probably achieve an LOS "A" or "B" rating for the viaduct by eliminating (prohibiting) all turning movements ... i.e. only allow traffic to go straight through the intersection (OK, and maybe make right turns) ... and you would have only 2 traffic light signals and wonderful LOS! Yay!

Obviously, this is silly.

Obviously it would be wrong to look at alternatives as in any way "better" due to relatively better LOS ratings stemming from their ELIMINATION of turning movements (degrees of freedom) ... which should be a NEGATIVE, not a positive ... if anything!

There is nothing stopping the city from prohibiting/eliminating the extra turning movements allowed by the viaduct to erase any LOS "advantage" that other more physically-restrictive alternatives impose.

Adrian

--

Tony Carrasco

CARRASCO & ASSOCIATES

<http://www.carrasco.com/>

[1885 El Camino Real, Palo Alto CA 94306](http://www.carrasco.com/)

650-322-2288

From: [J Stinson](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Traffic Inducement
Date: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:13:03 AM

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XCAP members,

Apologies for the second email, but I wanted to make sure to highlight this issue separate from the fact sheet discrepancies.

In the last XCAP meeting, it was uncovered that none of the traffic studies done by the contracting firm (Hexagon) considered any traffic “inducement”, except for the Closure+Mitigation. Inducement is the concept of more traffic moving to a new route because either the old route has gotten worse or a new route has gotten better (from a travel time perspective). For instance, in the case of Churchill Closure, Hexagon definitely studied the inducement of additional traffic on both Embarcadero and Oregon Expwy —because that traffic can no longer travel down Churchill. However, in the case of both the Viaduct and the Partial Underpass at Churchill, no study was done to assess if decreased travel time along Churchill would increase the amount of traffic along Churchill. Instead, the firm assessed the existing and projected traffic volumes, assuming no add'l traffic was pulled from any of the surrounding areas. The firm said inducement is typically not required as most folks are trying to get somewhere and are unlikely to “bypass” just to save a few minutes. However, as their own study shows, roughly 70% of all traffic on Churchill is doing just that—it is trying to bypass from El Camino to Alma/Embarcadero or vice versa to save time. Since Churchill dead-ends at Stanford and goes into a slow neighborhood to dead-end on Embarcadero on the other side, most of the traffic is not using it as a destination but as a bypass or cutoff.

In other words, the traffic along Churchill is already trying to reduce travel time by "cutting thru" to get to other routes. If the Churchill bypass is improved, it would seem that it has a *high* likelihood of pulling more traffic from surrounding areas--well beyond the current projected traffic volumes.

I would strongly encourage XCAP to request that Hexagon to study the impact of inducement on Churchill in the other two options beyond Closure+Mitigation.

Thanks again,
Jason Stinson

p.s. Also a huge thank you to Nadia Naik for identifying/uncovering this issue in last week's XCAP.

From: [Phil Burton](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: about the future of working in offices in Silicon Valley
Date: Thursday, July 30, 2020 5:22:05 PM

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PLEASE DO NOT REPLY TO THIS EMAIL

This article suggests that Caltrain will gain a substantial amount of its former ridership over time. As a consultant for the last ten years of my career, I learned that the bane of consulting is working at home, in isolation. I was always happy when I had a client that required me to work in their offices.

<https://computerhistory.org/blog/silicon-valleys-office-culture-will-survive-covid-19-bet-on-it/>
Phil Burton

From: [Inder Monga](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Fwd: Neighborhood communication to XCAP, City Council, City Staff
Date: Friday, July 31, 2020 8:30:43 AM
Attachments: [Community letter to XCAP City Council July 28 2020 FINAL.pdf](#)

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Dear XCAP

You may not have received the original email due to operator error - I had .com as the extension instead of .org.

Please review the message below

Thanks
Inder

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

From: **Inder Monga** <imonga@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Jul 29, 2020 at 11:25 PM
Subject: Neighborhood communication to XCAP, City Council, City Staff
To: <xcap@cityofpaloalto.com>, city.council <city.council@cityofpaloalto.org>, Ed.Shikada <Ed.Shikada@cityofpaloalto.org>, Chantal.Gaines <Chantal.Gaines@cityofpaloalto.org>, Philip.Kamhi <Philip.Kamhi@cityofpaloalto.org>, <nadianaik@gmail.com>
Cc: Rachel Kellerman <kellerman@yahoo.com>, Kathy Jordan <kjordan@stanfordalumni.org>, Susan Newman <snewzy@gmail.com>, Michael <michael@mac-archcon.com>, Barbara Hazlett <bthazlett@aol.com>

July 29th, 2020

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I do hope everyone and their families are keeping safe during these trying times. We are writing as a representative group of Palo Alto citizens residing in Professorville, Embarcadero Corridor and Southgate areas. All of us are much appreciative of all the work, volunteer time and tough conversations that have happened around this project. As a set of neighborhoods, we have the best for Palo Alto in our hearts and are communicating with that intention.

Through our regular neighborhood zoom calls every Saturday morning, we have become increasingly concerned about the recent decision within XCAP to develop recommendations based on stale traffic data and considerations around Caltrain future. This is not representative of the phase change in progress due to the recent pandemic. On the other hand, XCAP does feel bound by the original charge from the City Council and unable to change direction.

This letter signed by many residents (addresses available on request) from these areas would like to urge the City Council, City Manager and XCAP to reconsider the charge and adapt

its mission based on the current situation.

As a representative of that group, I do hope that you will take this concern under serious consideration, and as a set of Palo Alto citizens, would like to hear back from you. We would also like to invite you to our Saturday zoom calls if you would like to hear these concerns in person.

Best Regards,
Inder

p.s. we are constantly getting more signatories, and will add more names as they come in.

Date: July 25th, 2020

Dear City Council, City Manager, and Palo Alto Expanded Community Advisory Panel,

We would like to acknowledge and thank the tireless work being done by the XCAP committee, the city staff and the City Council as all of us work through the challenging issues of grade separation across the multiple crossings in Palo Alto.

This letter is from a collection of residents of Professorville, Southgate and the Embarcadero Corridor who have been actively participating in and monitoring the deliberations of the XCAP and City Council regarding mitigation of the Caltrain corridor's effect on the Churchill crossing and beyond. We are strongly of the view that neither the XCAP nor the City Council has developed **sufficient data or community input** to adopt specific recommendations or approve a specific solution for this crossing at this time. Moreover, in light of current circumstances and uncertainties, we believe that the **adoption of a recommendation now is both unnecessary and inappropriate.**

The points below articulate the sentiments of the neighborhood residents:

Pandemic Phase Change

The pandemic has caused a radical, possibly permanent "phase change" in our environment in a number of ways:

Caltrain: A projected increase in the number of commuter trains prompted the discussion of grade separation in Palo Alto (https://connectingpaloalto.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/2020-07-08_Item3a_Memo-to-XCAP-from-Chair.pdf - Item 1.1). However, ridership is down 95%+ since March, with as few as 15 riders per train (PA Daily Post, 'Caltrain tax battle escalates,' 7/20/20).

Moreover, as we heard from Caltrain representatives last week, deep funding issues all but guarantee that Caltrain won't increase the number of trains in the foreseeable future. Caltrain's pre Covid 19 business plan, calling for increased service (increased number of trains), has been paused (https://www.caltrain.com/projectsplans/Business_Plan.html), and Caltrain has shifted its focus to recovery planning.

Vehicle Traffic and Remote Work: Because of the Covid 19 crisis, car usage has dropped substantially throughout Palo Alto and Silicon Valley (<https://www.ite.org/about-ite/covid-19-resources/covid-19-traffic-volume-trends/>) as substantial numbers of commuters have shifted to working remotely. Even though the shift was occasioned by the pandemic, a May 2020 Bay Area Council survey of 100 businesses found that 20% of the firms surveyed expect to go fully remote post-Covid 19. Executives in the other

firms surveyed said they expect only 74% of their workers to return to working in the office. Just today, Siemens announced it will permit its employees to work remotely up to three days/week - permanently (<https://www.inc.com/justin-bariso/this-companys-new-2-sentence-remote-work-policy-is-best-ive-ever-heard.html?cid=search>), while Google announced its employees can work from home for another year, until July 2021 (<https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/07/27/895734132/google-employees-can-work-from-home-until-july-2021>).

Covid 19 Timeframe: There may still be a lengthy wait before a Covid 19 vaccine is developed and made available for everyone, which portends continued social distancing and continued associated impact on mass transit, including Caltrain. “Even if the optimists are right and a COVID-19 vaccine is approved for widespread use as early as this fall, it is likely to be in short supply at first.”

<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/06/line-forming-covid-19-vaccine-who-should-be-front>

This phase change is causing a dramatic shift, **with virtual space being swapped for physical space**. “Work at home” and more dramatically “work anywhere” is the new reality for large portions of the workforce. We can’t currently predict the future impact on either mass transit or traffic.

Caltrain Corridor Study

At the same time, Caltrain is commencing a two-year study of grade separations along the entire rail corridor with the aim of producing coordinated design, construction, and funding solutions and streamlining the exceptions process. Palo Alto may well forfeit the benefits of this process if the City proceeds with recommendations for Palo Alto grade crossings before it is even underway.

XCAP Representation

When the City Manager and City Council reconstituted the CAP as the XCAP, the neighborhood representatives who served on the CAP largely stayed in place and pledged to shift their focus from neighborhood engagement and advocacy to a community-wide perspective. New members from various constituencies were supposed to further broaden the group’s expertise.

Representation has now dropped from 14 members to 9, including 4 of the 5 members who represented the broader view (PAUSD, Chamber of Commerce, Friends of Caltrain, and a rail crossing safety organization). Ongoing lack of representation from Stanford and Palo Alto Bike/Ped safety groups clearly adds to this concern. Moreover, with the resignation of Megan Kanne, the CAP/XCAP member who originally engaged with the communities north of and around the western portion of Embarcadero, residents in those neighborhoods are concerned that their voices are not being heard.

Similarly, a large portion of Southgate residents who favor a solution that keeps the Churchill crossing open, share the same worry. Further, neighborhoods adjacent to Embarcadero corridor, which will be impacted by any decision, are troubled by the lack of community outreach.

We understand that a primary goal of XCAP and City Council is to garner broad community support for grade crossing decisions. With the disruptions caused by the pandemic, plans to engage the community through Town Halls and other means have not been enacted, which should itself be a reason for pause.

Traffic Studies and Mitigation Proposals

As XCAP and City Council Members may be aware, the traffic studies conducted by Hexagon failed to take into account a number of critical, real-world factors likely to shift their analysis. Examples of such factors include population and traffic increases in line with Caltrain and regional projections, the interactions between peak hour traffic and the large numbers of bicyclists and pedestrians traveling to Palo Alto schools, among others. Requests from both XCAP members and the public to address these issues have yet to be addressed. There are a number of other areas in which the Hexagon's report appears incomplete and inadequate.

- The traffic study only looks at car traffic (LOS) and ignores the impacts to the very busy school/community bicycle and pedestrian route that runs along the north side of Embarcadero. Indeed, Embarcadero Road is an official Palo Alto bicycle route, but that fact not reflected in the conceptual design
- While the traffic study looks at impacts of increased rail traffic and various rail crossing alternatives to car traffic, it does so in a limited way, focusing only on wait times at a few intersections (LOS). Effects of closure or other rail separation alternatives on Vehicle Miles Traveled, total transit times, or other important measures are not considered.
- The traffic study does not even provide a current count of cars traveling Embarcadero and other affected corridors because the consultants were not asked to do so. It makes no sense to design a plan that routes thousands more cars onto Embarcadero Road when there is no baseline count of the number of cars that take this busy roadway before mitigations are enacted.
- Similarly, the traffic analysis fails to provide a count of bicycle and pedestrian traffic and to base mitigation proposals on the study of interactions between cars and bike/ped traffic. Residents did a daily count of bicycles and pedestrians that crossed the busy intersection of Emerson/Kingsley/Embarcadero between 7:30-8:30 am on a typical school day and counted 300 bike/ped crossings and 100 cars that stopped or "paused" at the stop sign; however that data has not been considered in the mitigation plan.
- Traffic mitigation plans for this area should include a Kingsley/Embarcadero bike/pedestrian route that is safe enough to qualify for "safe route to school" designation.

Requests from both XCAP members and the public to address these issues have yet to be answered.

In addition to our concerns about the traffic study, we question the cost allotted to the Churchill closure alternative and associated mitigation plan, as well as the characterization of the engineering challenges represented in the Summary Matrix and Factsheet. Specifically, we anticipate that retrofitting and substantially expanding the Embarcadero overpass will likely entail considerable time, seismic upgrades and other technical challenges, and substantial expenses that are not reflected in the current documentation. We are aware of no detailed, publicly available analysis of this part of the project, so any plans that include modifications to the overpass are merely speculative at this time.

As a result, the rosy conclusions about the efficacy of the proposed mitigations on Embarcadero are not viewed as credible by most area residents.

Palo Alto Avenue Crossing

Changes to the Palo Alto Avenue crossing will have reverberating effects on other crossings in town, particularly Embarcadero, Oregon, and El Camino Real, with spill-over effects on neighborhood streets. It is unrealistic and unfair not to consider how residents may be affected by changes to Palo Alto Ave when choosing among alternatives elsewhere, like Churchill crossing and Embarcadero traffic mitigation.

XCAP Deliberations

XCAP is going into deliberations before these issues can be raised and discussed in front of the City Council and changes in guidance formulated. Currently, XCAP can only issue recommendations based on incomplete and overly-conceptual traffic studies, a soon-to-be-outmoded Caltrain review process for grade separations, and other work done pre-COVID.

We do recognize that the XCAP was given a charge to provide these recommendations. However, that charge was based on certain underlying assumptions at that time, assumptions which are now outdated and no longer valid. Given this, any recommendations the XCAP makes based on outdated assumptions, may also end up - outdated.

Time to Pause

The new normal in work and commute patterns is an opportunity for the City Council, XCAP, and the City Manager. With increased Caltrain service no longer a motivator, there is no driver for Churchill closure, and postponing a recommendation for the time being is a viable and workable option. There is time to do what needs to be done, namely to address the following issues and developments:

- Caltrain's changing operating plans
- Possible shifts in work/commute patterns throughout Silicon Valley
- Gaps in neighborhood representation & drop in the diversity of the committee's members
- Omission of the impact of the Palo Alto Avenue crossing
- Major inadequacies in the existing traffic/mitigation analysis

- Opening of possibilities with Caltrain's comprehensive study of rail crossings across the entire corridor and reconfiguring of their exceptions process

More positively, this disruptive pandemic should be seen as an opportunity for City Council and the people of Palo Alto to pause the current process and regroup, in order to consider a holistic view of ALL the crossings in town, incorporate the principles behind the Comprehensive Plan, address inconsistencies in XCAP guidance, remove any neighborhood bias by improving representation of the various impacted communities, and proceed with a more harmonized view of the city inclusive of both east and west sides of the tracks.

XCAP's Excellent Work

We reiterate our appreciation of the volunteer XCAP committee and their committed engagement over the past year. Although we believe they are not in a position to issue recommendations, their efforts should not go to waste. City Council, Staff, and Palo Alto residents will benefit from the review of what they have learned about the many constraints and considerations involved in modifying our at-grade crossings, as well as their qualitative assessments of the alternatives. They are also in a uniquely qualified position to articulate the questions that remain to be answered and the aspects that need to be studied further.

Our Request

With all due respect to the City Council, the City Manager, the volunteer XCAP committee, and the Palo Alto citizens, we request that XCAP's **goal be modified to acknowledge the dramatically altered state of current affairs** as well as the limitations of their investigations and analyses, and to **refrain from making final recommendations**.

Sincerely

Inder Monga
Reshma Singh
Michael Chacon
Mary Chacon
Rachel Kellerman
Tom Kellerman
Kathy Jordan
William Chandler
Susan Newman
James O'Donohue
Steven Carlson
Husna Hashmi
Jahangir Hashmi
Dexter Girton
Sara Girton
Beverly Sarver

Dan Nitzan
Susan Nitzan
Susan Mitchell
Terry Rice
Barbara Hazlett
William (Butch) Hazlett
Lisa Nissim
Katherine K Wilson
Lucia Ugarte
Rich Spott
Rob Levitsky
Carl Dowds
Margaret Kim
Nancy Patterson
David Schellinger
Caroline Japic
Haris Japic
Eileen Fagan
Loreto Ponce de Leon
Karen Hohner
Yoriko Kishimoto
Prasad Chakka

From: [Grace Renners](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: We're in support of the Closure + Mitigations option in the event that the City has to eliminate the at-grade rail crossing.
Date: Friday, July 31, 2020 5:06:35 PM

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

Thanks so much for highlighting the upcoming XCAP meeting (and making sure everyone is aware of Survey 2.0). The XCAP meetings have been held every week for the past 6-7 weeks and they continue to be committed to trying to have a recommendation for the City Council in the next few months. Of course, this is an extremely complicated and emotional issue—it is going to be difficult for any group, including XCAP, to make a strong recommendation. Time will tell. Also, the City Council is not beholden to take the recommendation of the XCAP and ultimately, any decision by City Council is highly likely to eventually go to the voters. So long road ahead.

A small group has regularly attended the XCAP meetings (incl myself). My personal summary of the status thus far:
Viaduct: The most expensive (\$300-\$400M) of the three options and while it is the only option that preserves all the vehicular traffic crossings in its current form (w/o a pesky train to interrupt the flow), it also has the worst traffic Level Of Service (LOS) rating of the three options (D/E letter grade, where A is best and F is worst). It's also fairly clear that XCAP is intimately aware that no one in the vicinity (Southgate & Old Palo Alto) is advocating for this option—it's very unpopular. While diligence is key to keep this one from becoming a reality, this one really seems like an extremely unlikely choice.

Partial Underpass: A wee bit more than half the cost of the Viaduct (\$160-200M), this late arriving option is quite complicated. It preserves *some* of the vehicular crossings at Churchill/Alma, eliminates others and creates some new barriers for still others (e.g. Mariposa can no longer exit onto Churchill, Old Palo Alto no longer has a protected left turn onto Alma southbound). According to the traffic report, it has the best LOS rating of the three options (B/C). This option is also expected to require the taking of a small bit of land from private property (called a "sliver") as well as quite a bit of land from Paly and an allowance from Caltrain land. Caltrain has very clearly stated that they will not give up this allowance.

Closure + Mitigations: At less than one third the cost of the Partial Underpass (\$50-65M), the majority of the cost comes not from closing Churchill but from fixing the massively broken El Camino/Embarcadero, Alma/Embarcadero and Alma/Oregon Expwy crossings. The traffic study rates this very close to the same LOS as the Partial Underpass (C/C). Most of the concerns about this option have been addressed (traffic implications to other roadways – traffic analysis of the closure + mitigations; safety – clear message from both Fire and Police that this will not affect response times). However, there continues to be a vocal opposition, which primarily cites concerns about both traffic and safety.

Few other points to help bring folks up to speed:

In the Survey 2.0, you'll note that there is a question about re-opening of the Peers Park exit from Southgate (Castilleja/Park Blvd), which was closed in the early 70's (it was a *hotly* contested topic at the time). The Peers Park opening has been suggested by various members of the public as a potential alleviation for Southgate residents to open a secondary path to Oregon Expwy other than El Camino in the event of Churchill closure. It has never been on any proposal by the City Council, XCAP or any other municipal group. Similar to 1972, the opening of Peers would likely be a highly contentious topic and since it's not really needed/relevant to the rail crossings, is highly unlikely to be placed on any decision matrix anytime in the near future. Both the Council and XCAP are pretty weary and I'd be surprised if they entertained any options not directly impacting the rail crossings, especially contentious ones. However, by placing the question on the Survey 2.0, it definitely feeds the fears of a Closure by anyone in the Southgate or Evergreen Park neighborhoods.

The local debate has gotten a bit out of hand at times. Signs were made opposing Churchill Closure (using a simplified scare message: where do all the cars go?) and illegally put onto private property w/o owner permission along Churchill Ave as well as illegally put onto public land (Paly)—in the middle of the night. You can imagine how you'd feel if you woke up and someone had put a sign on your front lawn or across the street on public land, especially after having been very vocal in opposition to the message on the sign. Many of the residents along

Churchill don't have to imagine.

In the last XCAP, it was discovered that none of the traffic studies done by the contracting firm (Hexagon) considered any traffic "inducement", except for the Closure. Inducement is the concept of more traffic moving to a new route because either the old route has gotten worse or a new route has gotten better. For instance, in the case of Churchill Closure, Hexagon definitely studied the inducement of additional traffic on both Embarcadero and Oregon Expwy—cuz that traffic can no longer travel down Churchill. However, in the case of both the Viaduct and the Partial Underpass, no study was done to assess if improved travel along Churchill would increase the amount of traffic along Churchill. Instead, the firm assessed the existing and projected traffic volumes, assuming no add'l traffic was pulled from any of the surrounding areas. The firm said inducement is typically not required as most folks are trying to get somewhere and are unlikely to "bypass" just to save a few minutes. However, as their own study shows, roughly 70% of all traffic on Churchill is doing just that—it is trying to bypass from El Camino to Alma/Embarcadero or vice versa. Since Churchill dead-ends at Stanford and goes into a slow neighborhood to dead-end on Embarcadero on the other side, most of the traffic is not using it as a destination but as a bypass or cutoff.

Lastly, it's unclear if any of this will really matter given the current state of Caltrain, the State and our Nation. This has been regularly pointed out by members of the public in both City Council and XCAP meetings. Unfortunately, both the City Council and XCAP aren't chartered with telling Caltrain and the State that their plans are garbage and simply halting all efforts to evaluate options; they are required to proceed until such a time as the electrification plans are halted by a higher power. If that does come to pass, then it will just have been a painful and neighborhood-splitting exercise in city-wide traffic planning.

P.S. I strongly believe in full disclosure of position/bias in any survey or summary: I'm in support of the Closure + Mitigations option in the event that the City has to eliminate the at-grade rail crossing. Hopefully that helps you assess your own take on my take. It would have been great if the "Southgate Neighborhood Committee on the Churchill Rail Crossing", which sponsors the Survey 2.0, had also disclosed their position/bias. Or, even better, invited a diversity of opinion into the "Neighborhood Committee".

Sincerely,
Susan and JC Renners
1645 Mariposa Avenue

From: [Wilson, Sarah](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [Kamhi, Philip](#); [Bhatia, Ripon](#)
Subject: RE: Suggested edits
Date: Monday, August 3, 2020 12:38:29 PM

Hello XCAP members,

Please see below from Ms. Kishimoto.

Sarah Wilson
Administrative Assistant, Office of Transportation
City of Palo Alto
Sarah.Wilson@CityofPaloAlto.org
(650) 329-2552

From: Nadia Naik <nadianaik@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2020 5:21 PM
To: Kamhi, Philip <Philip.Kamhi@CityofPaloAlto.org>; Bhatia, Ripon <Ripon.Bhatia@CityofPaloAlto.org>; Gary Black <gblack@hextrans.com>; Litzinger, Millette <millette.litzinger@aecom.com>; DeStefano, Peter <peter.destefano@aecom.com>; Wilson, Sarah <Sarah.Wilson@CityofPaloAlto.org>; Shikada, Ed <Ed.Shikada@CityofPaloAlto.org>
Cc: Larry Klein <lklein40@gmail.com>
Subject: Fwd: Suggested edits

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All,

Per our last meeting - below are suggestions from former Mayor Yoriko Kishimoto. She had voiced concerns about wording she felt were biased and has offered her suggestions.

Could someone please distribute to the XCAP as an FYI?

Thanks
Nadia

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

From: **YORIKO KISHIMOTO** <yoriko12330@icloud.com>
Date: Thu, Jul 30, 2020 at 3:54 PM
Subject: Suggested edits
To: Nadia Naik <nadianaik@gmail.com>

Dear Chair Naik (Nadia):

Thank you so much for your hard work as chair of XCAP. Especially since there is no representative on XCAP from the Embarcadero/Professorville neighborhood and several from Churchill/Old Palo Alto, we really appreciate your invitation to submit suggested edits so biases are taken out of the document as much as possible.

Here are a couple that caught my eye. Please feel free to share with XCAP and staff.

Draft of Chapter 2 provided by XCAP members

1.3.1.7 Churchill Ave Closure with Mitigations

Introduction

Churchill Ave is a residential street which runs through Old Palo Alto from Embarcadero to Alma, and then from Alma and El Camino in Southgate. It is narrow and one lane each way with many stop signs. Because it is one of the few places on Alma Street where a left turn can be safely made due to the traffic light, it commands a lot of vehicular traffic **in addition to Embarcadero Road and Oregon Expressway.** ~~(eliminate: This is in addition to nonoptimal sections of road on Embarcadero, between Alma and El Camino, as well as on Oregon Expressway, between Alma and El Camino, both of which drive some traffic to cross to El Camino through Southgate.)~~* see notes*

Running next to Palo Alto High School, Churchill Ave is a major crossing point for students on bicycles going to and from school. In the interest of cost, it was proposed to simply close Churchill to vehicular traffic, and **expand intersections and roadways** at Embarcadero Road and Oregon Expressway to enable diverted traffic to flow better there. Additional mitigations would be provided for pedestrians and cyclists to still cross Alma at Churchill, enabling access to Palo Alto High, Stanford University, and points beyond. **Embarcadero Road is a residential arterial that serves Professorville and Old Palo Alto and houses three schools, Town and Country, churches and 120 residences. As a historic road, it is also narrow between El Camino and Middlefield, as narrow as Churchill.**

Description

From the Churchill Ave Closure with Mitigations Fact Sheet:

For the Churchill closure alternative, the railroad tracks will remain at their existing location and elevation (as is). Churchill Avenue will become a T-intersection with Alma Street on the east side and will end at Mariposa Avenue on the west side. A pedestrian/bike only undercrossing will be constructed. Two options are proposed: one crosses under the railroad tracks only (Option 1) and the other crosses under both the railroad tracks and Alma Street (Option 2). Ramps and stairs in varying configurations will provide access to the undercrossing for pedestrians and cyclists.

There are several intersection ~~(eliminate: improvements)~~ **expansions** associated with the Churchill Avenue closure to **re-direct** the traffic. These **roadway and intersection expansions** will include:

- Embarcadero Road/Alma Street: constructing a pedestrian/bike overcrossing at Embarcadero Road, widening Alma Street on the Embarcadero underpass, adding a right turn lane from eastbound Embarcadero Road and left turn lane from southbound Alma Street, and installing a new signal at Embarcadero Road/Kingsley Avenue/High Street. Two options are proposed: one that provides full connectivity to/from High Street (Option A) and the other that keeps the movements to/from High Street as they are today (Option B).
- El Camino Real/Embarcadero Road: optimizing signal timing and installing an additional westbound left turn lane and northbound right turn lane.
- Alma Street/Oregon Expressway: signaling both on/off ramps
etc.

***Note: non-optimal? Palo Alto's policies favor alternatives to single occupancy vehicles, so we have**

dedicated many millions of dollars to reduce Charleston-Arastradero, one of the four residential arterials along with Embarcadero, Middlefield and University, from four lanes of speeding traffic to two plus bike lanes and turn lanes. Our consultants or some residents may not know this about Palo Alto.

* Also please note that on the north side of Embarcadero from Bryant Street to El Camino is a busy bicycle and pedestrian path that serves as a major nexus for students, Stanford and Town and Country.

From: [Rachel Croft](#)
To: [Shailesh Rao](#); [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Re: Southgate Neighborhood Churchill Intersection Survey
Date: Saturday, August 8, 2020 3:49:13 PM

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

Dear XCAP members and Shailesh - My sincere apologies. I did not mean to copy XCAP on this email. PLEASE do not include it in the public comments. I was trying to copy the email address for XCAP to give it to Shailesh and I knew if I typed it in the address bar it would show up. I am very embarrassed that I didn't remove it before sending!!!
Larry - thank you for replying or I would not have realized I copied you.

We on Mariposa are concerned that Steve Carlsen's group turned off the survey and wouldn't let further people participate, which was why I was suggesting we speak up at the time the results are presented to XCAP.

Please accept my apology and if possible remove it from public emails to XCAP.
Rachel

On Sat, Aug 8, 2020 at 10:08 AM Rachel Croft <croftr@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Shailesh - OMG - you should go ballistic - me too!. I am outraged - That is incredible and just so crooked
You will not be jeopardizing any of my efforts - we need to fight for our right to have our votes heard. There was no deadline on any of their communications. It is a surveymonkey, for gods sake, which tallies results immediately, so shouldn't cause any difficulty in their vote counting.
We need to tell the XCAP that they are limiting participation. Are you up for drafting an email to Nadia (head of XCAP) and XCAP as a group? I would gladly do this (maybe we both should) xcap@cityofpaloalto.org
Also, we should post on nextdoor as a response that they have "closed the survey" and not taking more answers. You OK w/me posting a message there too? Here is the string: https://nextdoor.com/post/156057786?init_source=copy_link_share

thanks for letting me know!
Rachel

On Sat, Aug 8, 2020 at 8:19 AM Shailesh Rao <srao9386@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Rachel, see below.

I am tempted to go ballistic about my rights and how unfair this is etc etc.

But I know you and many others on our side of the debate have spent hours on this (thankyou) and i didn't want to jeopardize any of your efforts by my reaction.

What do you suggest?

Hope you are well

Thanks,
Shailesh

pls xcuz brvty an tpyos, sent 4om phone

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

From: **Southgate Neighbors** <Southgate2020@earthlink.net>
Date: Sat, Aug 8, 2020, 8:07 AM
Subject: Re: Southgate Neighborhood Churchill Intersection Survey
To: Shailesh Rao <srao9386@gmail.com>
Cc: Susan Newman <snewman@workpractice.com>

Hi Shailesh,

Thanks for your interest and I am so sorry! The survey ran for 10 days but closed last Monday when we stopped getting new requests. However, we are very glad to include you in the report we will be sending to all participants with the results, which should be coming soon.

best

Steve Carlson

Susan, would you please make sure Shailesh is on the list of people to receive the results?

> On Aug 8, 2020, at 7:56 AM, Shailesh Rao <srao9386@gmail.com> wrote:

>

> Hello,

> My name is Shailesh Rao and I live at 1519 Mariposa Ave in Southgate. I understand there is a survey being undertaken of the neighborhood to determine preferences for the future of the Caltrain track.

>

> I haven't rec'd a copy of the survey, can you please send me a copy?

>

> Thanks,

> Shailesh

>

> -----

> pls xcuz brvty an tpyos, sent 4om phone

From: [Ellen Hartog](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Charleston and Meadow underpass
Date: Sunday, August 9, 2020 9:24:25 PM

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The underpass at Charleston going East does not allow you to turn left onto North bound Alma without driving out of the way and making a huge circle u-turn - most likely a driver will opt to turn left at Wilkie to Meadow to be able to turn left on to Alma from there. This will increase the traffic load on a bike route and heavy walking area from neighborhood to local Robles Park. Wilkie will need a circle turn about at James to quiet traffic! I highly suggest that the option to turn left at Charleston eastbound to Alma northbound be re-investigated to omit taking out properties as well. I don't see why a left turn couldn't be similar in design to the left turn designed at Meadow now. This saves homes. It is already a slow intersection and as it should be. No reason why it should be a fast pace at this junction, this is suppose to be the traffic quieting street and this solution produces more traffic and more traffic throughout the neighboring residential area to avoid a awkward solution - a circle u turn mile out of the way, plus loosing homes!

Thank you,
Ellen Hartog

From: tom@tomvlastic.com
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [Council City](#); [Rachel](#); dshenster@gmail.com; [John Monroe](#); [Anne Kramer](#)
Subject: 8/12 XCAP Meeting -- Churchill Crossing Options
Date: Monday, August 10, 2020 11:11:44 AM

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

Dear XCAP members,

Thank you for your work on the rail crossing issues and your efforts to formulate recommendations to the City Council. We are SIP out of state right now, but wanted to share some comments with you relative to the Churchill crossing options and, generally on the process as it is proceeding.

First, generally, it has been disappointing to us that the process has not been placed on hold until there is a better understanding of the overall impacts of the pandemic, including funding realities. The "facts" on the options continue to be cautioned based on the lack of any ability to predict the impacts and therefore, it is likely that any "decision" will be tentative at best and have to be revisited.

Churchill Options. As we have stated in the past, we strongly favor closing Churchill with adequate attention to bike and pedestrian access, particularly to and from Paly. Based on the most recent studies and "conclusions" it appears that this option and the viaduct are getting the most support in the consultant analysis. You will be receiving another Southgate "neighborhood survey" that has been circulated by those with leanings to keeping Churchill open. The "survey" is one attempt to gauge neighborhood sentiment, but no matter how well-meaning and careful the survey effort has been, it has its biases, particularly in the manner in which it was initially shared with "neighbors" and distributed for responses. Further, it is another reflection of the City's approach to decision making that seems to encourage conflict between neighbors and neighborhoods (e.g., the Castillija CUP--"for" and "against" signs up for years, and now a referendum for Foothills Park access). In any case, we do appreciate that the "survey" results as they are coming to you and were shared with neighbor responders includes what appear to be all of the comments that were offered as part of the "yes" or "no" responses to questions. These comments provide a fair perspective on the scope of the problems of trying to reach a real neighborhood consensus on the Churchill crossing issues.

Based on the input received to date, we believe the viaduct is actually the least preferable and worst option now before you. It will truly divide Palo Alto both physically and emotionally, creating an ugly visual barrier between the North and South sides. It will dramatically alter the character of Palo Alto for the worst, and it places the full burden of the Churchill crossing "solution" on the properties immediately along the viaduct rail corridor when the studies show there is no true need for such burdens to be placed on these properties. The closure option is far superior in terms of conformity with the basic principals of the City's comprehensive plan, and relative to overall impacts and the financial realities as they can be gauged at this point. So if you must proceed with a decision in these uncertain and unprecedented times, we hope you will support the Churchill closure option.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views with you and, again for your extensive work on this matter.

Regards,
Tom and Linda Vlastic
Southgate

From: [Michael Brozman](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Churchill Rail Crossing
Date: Monday, August 10, 2020 9:59:06 PM

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Hi XCAP,

As part of the upcoming meeting on Wednesday I would like a better understanding of why the draft reports states:

"The Viaduct and the Closure + Mitigations are the two alternatives that fare best at Churchill Ave"

In reading the report and other supplied documents (including the "Matrix - Summary of Evaluations with City Council Adopted Criteria"), I'm unclear on how the report arrives at that conclusion. I'm not even saying I disagree with the conclusion necessarily, just that the draft report makes no cohesive argument to support and even seems to refute its own argument in the summary itself:

"The Viaduct affects the views from 32 backyards...". This sounds pretty bad. No doubt other things are being weighed to offset it though.

My point being that it would be good to actually understand the committee's priorities here because there are pros and cons to each option, and w/o understanding priorities, then it's impossible to understand the recommendation being made here.

Regards,

Michael from Southgate

Participant Comments
Southgate Neighborhood Churchill Options Survey
July 2020

This document contains all individual comments submitted in response to the Southgate Neighborhood Survey regarding options for the Churchill-Alma intersection. Comments were solicited for Questions 3, 4, and 5. In addition, there was a field for Final Comments at the end of the survey.

For easy access, **you may click on a link** below to go directly to comments for a question you are interested in:

[Question #3](#): Based on your current knowledge, what is your opinion about closing Churchill?

[Question #4](#): I am most in favor of 1) Closing Churchill, 2) Viaduct, or 3) Partial Underpass

[Question #5](#): IF the city decided to close Churchill, would you be in favor of opening Castilleja at Park Boulevard (by Peers Park) to allow through traffic?

[Final Comments](#) in response to this survey

Comments on Question 3:

Based on your current knowledge, what is your opinion about closing Churchill?

- Dead-ending our residential enclave and blocking logical ingress & egress to schools & businesses is nuts!

- This choice is based on the original two choices of closing Churchill or viaduct. My true preference order is 1. partial underpass, 2. close Churchill, 3. viaduct.

- Of these 2 choices, I am in favor of closing with traffic mitigation measures on other arteries (and possibly opening at Peers Park). Since the partial option came to light, that seems like a good compromise too.

- In favor of partial underpass!! No viaduct! No Churchill closure!

- I see traffic backed up on Churchill from Alma with cars blocking most of the intersections into Southgate on weekdays during afternoon commutes and it is hard to make a left turn onto Churchill in the morning.
- Churchill is very short street, that isn't worth multimillion overpass spending.
- Closing the intersection would make traffic much worse, and it would slow down emergency response time for our neighborhood. It would also make it a much slower commute for those of us who live in Southgate—even just to go pick up groceries.
- While losing direct access to Alma will be sad, I think it's the only reasonable path forward from a cost standpoint. I don't think a viaduct will ever be politically feasible, although I don't think it's a bad option (if implemented correctly). I lived near one of BART's elevated lines (Rockridge) for a while, it wasn't at all disturbing. But it wasn't seeing heavy freight traffic (which I think is the largest noise source, given what I hear several blocks away from the UP/Caltrain line).
- Closing Churchill will add too much traffic to other routes such as Embarcadero, and make it take too long for Southgate residents to get to places to the east or north.
- Is there a possibility to have it partially open to Southgate residence only? Have a gate system of some kind.
- Closing Churchill will have negative effects on the composition of our neighborhood, as younger families with jobs and kids move out so as to have better access to the east side of the tracks. Beyond our own neighborhood interests, I believe diverting thousands of cars per day to El Camino, Oregon, and Embarcadero will create even worse traffic than we have now (under non-COVID conditions).
- Prefer partial closure over closure.
- Of course without having done my homework, I realize the closure of Churchill may mean longer drive times for most outings, especially during peak travel periods - but I can deal with an additional 5 minutes for the many benefits of being in this neighborhood, and I'm most interested in what would serve the safety, equity, and accessibility needs of the city/region. So, I'm not especially concerned about localized inconvenience in my neighborhood if I understand a greater good that's being achieved.

- Would choose closing Churchill rather than a Viaduct.
- Of the options discussed, I think it is the best.
- Strongly in favor of closure
- Our household is split. My wife who does most of the driving would prefer Churchill to remain open if this is done via partial underpass. I find both closure and underpass to be suitable solutions. We both are strongly opposed to viaduct as this seems entirely inappropriate bisecting residential neighborhoods and if there were funding to support this level of construction it would be much better spent improving major roadways, e.g. Embarcadero/Oregon rather than facilitating the bypass route through Churchill that functions to offload traffic that is coming from or going to one of these roadways.
- Closure is the best option. I do not like Viaduct or Partial Underpass.
- Best option given the 2 other alternatives.
- The XCAP traffic analysis shows this to be the best option for all of Palo Alto. The cost is 1/3 to 1/4th the other option costs. There are NO critical effects to any neighbors. Viaduct is critically negative to Mariposa and Castilleja neighbors. Underpass is critically negative to Churchill and neighbors close to Churchill.
- I'd like to explore partial closure options - limiting left turns on to Churchill from Alma and from Churchill to Alma, thereby reducing wait time at that intersection and extending time when traffic can go on to Churchill west across Alma in the morning (should be longer in the morning as well as adding time in the afternoon, to increase safety for PALY students. Other pedestrian crossing options are needed there - at a minimum there needs to be pedestrian access across Alma at Churchill. Lastly, Stanford should work w/ the City to explore commute patterns and better connection between transit systems. A lot of people commute in single vehicles to/from Stanford on Churchill.
- I haven't seen information why existing track and crossing cannot be reused.
- While I appreciate the purpose of closing Churchill (and even acknowledge the benefits it might bring), I am concerned that an unintended consequence will be to physically and mentally untether Southgate from its current association with Old PA. This would have implications for house values, commuting times, ease of reaching friends and family on the other side of the tracks, access to Walter Hays, among many other issues. Without the Churchill thoroughfare, I suspect that Southgate stands a very good chance of being marginalized into one of a handful

of unconnected micro-neighborhoods stuck between Alma and El Camino; difficult to access, an oddity on the local map, not closely associated with the core of Palo Alto and not part of Stanford. As evidence of my concern, I can't point to another separation along Alma that has successfully maintained the intimate neighborhood connection between the east and west sides of the tracks. Instead, I'd bet that the long-term outcome of a pedestrian-only passageway would be a trend toward the dilapidation of what today is a functional, refreshingly human-scale (albeit busy and sometimes dangerous) waypoint between Stanford and the residential heart of PA. We are at risk of cutting off the blood flow to this unique neighborhood.

- A major concern we have is for the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists waiting at the corner of Alma and Churchill. Cars go too fast on Alma and, often times, students' bike tires protrude over the curb creating potential for accidents.
- I believe the XCAP committee and City Council should weigh the evidence of studies already conducted and cost estimates to arrive at a decision. I believe the people conducting this survey are a self-appointed group trying to promote their own preference.
- There is so much history on this matter, and so many facts and variables to consider, that the posing of the questions as presented here and any responses should not be viewed as providing meaningful input to the city decision makers. This should not be a popularity contest.
- The most important change is to stop train horn noise at Churchill. One hundred decibel train horn noise seriously disrupts sleep, causing sleep deprivation throughout all of Southgate and Old Palo Alto. I favor eliminating the stop lights at Churchill and El Camino and continuing the central strip that separates Northbound and Southbound traffic on El Camino straight across Churchill meaning that Westbound Churchill cars could only turn North on El Camino, and Southbound cars on El Camino could not turn left onto Churchill. Peers Park closure would be changed to allow cars to exit Southgate, but not to enter Southgate. The reason for this change is to prevent Uber/Lyft drivers from shortcutting through Southgate. Southgate residents could easily travel to California and South on Alma by exiting at Peers Park. The Churchill stoplight on El Camino would be eliminated making through traffic which would help with all the other changes that will be made, and traffic would move better. The Peers Park opening should have a stoplight and a camera in order to ticket cars entering Southgate illegally.
- It seems to me ridiculous to make me or anyone else go out of their way to get into Southgate, the neighborhood south of Palo Alto High School. There is already very limited access. Forcing cars to go around would put on extra mileage and increase the danger by driving an extra distance. Jeannine Olson, 1654 Portola Avenue, Palo Alto 94306,
- 1) It is the only safe option for PALY students 2) The current Churchill Ave. vehicle crossing is blatantly not effective - The total length of Churchill is only 0.8 miles. Thus, it can only serve as a local street - Churchill Ave. mainly serves traffics to/from the small triangle area of Embarcadero Rd./Churchill Ave., Embarcadero Rd./El Camino Real, and Churchill Ave./El Camino Real. (see attached map for details) - Closing Churchill has virtually no impact on all the traffic flows that are not to/from the small triangle area 3) The Churchill Ave. vehicle

crossing is extremely cost-ineffective - It is only about 0.3 mile from the Embarcadero Rd. vehicle crossing - No such dense railway crossing in entire bay area or even entire US - It was for PALY students when there were very few trains decades ago - It is well-known that it extremely unsafe for PALY students

- Irrespective of what happens at Churchill, the primary focus has to be improving traffic flow on Embarcadero and Oregon Expressway between El Camino and 101. There needs to be an intersection of Alma and Embarcadero, and improved flow between Alma and Oregon.
- I really don't like any of the options. The partial closure is the most promising but not enough of the details are worked out. I like the full closure as it is the only one that would include improving the Embarcadero crossing. I do not want the street at Peers park opened again to traffic.
- I would choose closing over the viaduct if those were the only 2 options on the table.
- I am strongly against the viaduct as it would be built behind my back fence. Both other options are acceptable, with closure preferred.
- Closing Churchill would effectively isolate Southgate from the rest of Palo Alto. I believe that separation would harm our quality of life as well as the value of our properties.
- I would prefer closing Churchill to a viaduct. And have major concerns about significant traffic increases on Churchill if trains are taken out of the equation (partial underpass).
- I'm in favor of closing Churchill to cars, not bikes and pedestrians
- I live in Southgate, and really don't see how traffic can work out with the crossing just being closed, and all traffic being diverted to Embarcadero and Oregon Xpress. More considerations should be directed to local residents and Palo Alto High. These are the people who are being affected the most. Not the people who live along Churchill and want something different. We have no options when we need to get out of our subdivision.
- Closing Churchill just totally impacts Embarcadero, already UNBEARABLY impacted, and El Camino, also VERY slow during normal rush hour.
- Even if we don't close Churchill, the number of train crossings planned will effectively close it. Let's be real about what is going to happen and plan accordingly, rather than engaging in wishful and magical thinking.
- Closing Churchill would increase already crowded roads as alternates. Additionally it would have a negative effect on PAUSD operations as noted in a letter from the Superintendent.
- My first preference is partial underpass. I am VEHEMENTLY opposed to a viaduct that will RUIN the aesthetics of the neighborhood.
- Absolutely do not want viaduct

- Don't spend hundreds of millions to build something when closing Churchill is safer and the traffic reports say it would not cause any issues.
- I believe closing Churchill creates disruptive traffic patterns elsewhere with significant undesirable effects.

Comments on Question 4:

Originally, there were two primary options on the table: closing Churchill or a Viaduct (raised platform for the train). Now, there is a third option (a partial underpass) which is also under evaluation. Of the potential options on the table (based on my current knowledge), I am most in favor of 1) Closing Churchill, 2) Viaduct, or 3) Partial Underpass.

- In Japan and France, they have viaducts, I don't see why they can't do it in this country
- I live on Mariposa which faces the train traffic and thus I have "skin in the game" as my family's livelihood will be negatively impacted with the Viaduct option. It is workable if "Partial underpass" results in train track remaining at current grade level. However, if Churchill remains open to Alma after partial underpass with left or right turns onto Alma, we might as well keep Churchill open because the same amount of traffic remains during commute hours as most cars are going to turn onto Alma.
- We are against closure, for sure. We are undecided about whether a viaduct or a partial underpass is better. But both Options are better than closure.
- This is by far the best suggestion without cutting off access to the southgate neighborhood.
- With the heavy freight traffic (and the noise of those trains), I think a viaduct isn't a feasible option. A partial underpass seems like a huge amount of work, for very little gain.

- Is undergrounding the train a viable option?
- I believe the Partial Underpass and the Viaduct plans both have merit, but I prefer to keep bicycle and pedestrian traffic above ground and to limit car traffic movement from Churchill East to Churchill West on an as-needed basis rather than preventing small amounts of traffic to move freely across Alma during non-peak hours. To make bicycle and pedestrian movement safer, I think we should use a dedicated bicycle/pedestrian signal at Alma/Churchill and at Castilleja/Churchill like the one in use at Homer Street, although I would only use it during the peak Paly commute hours. In lighter traffic, I think the current method works fine. I also think Palo Alto should mark bicycle lanes much more clearly along the length of Churchill and expand the west-bound bike lane on Churchill East to the area for parked cars, limiting parking there to overnight and weekends.
- I would prioritize aesthetics alongside safety, equity and accessibility for the city/region - this is a very long-term infrastructural project, physical/architectural aesthetics is of premium importance, and I'd rather accept some cost (which could mean monetary or convenience cost) than accept a physically ugly/imposing permanent structure for the sake of convenience (e.g., I'd accept longer drive times over a louder/more imposing/overbearing overpass...)
- My 2nd best choice is partial underpass.
- partial underpass; 2. closing. Viaduct is not an acceptable option in our view.
- I'm beginning to see the viaduct as the most viable option with the least disruption. However, the partial underpass is a very close second.
- Partial Underpass seems very complicated and very costly, and it will change the neighborhood dramatically in a negative way.
- Both the Viaduct and Partial Underpass will put up a massive concrete structure that will change the character of the neighborhood for the worse.
- The XCAP traffic analysis shows this to be the best option for all of Palo Alto. The cost is 1/3 to 1/4th the other option costs. There are NO critical effects to any neighbors. Viaduct is critically negative to Mariposa and Castilleja neighbors. Underpass is critically negative to Churchill and neighbors close to Churchill.
- What are the traffic simulations like?
- Underpass appears to be an attractive compromise
- Palo Alto does NOT need a viaduct - ever.
- Closure of Churchill with a pedestrian/bike underpass for Paly students would be the safest option, and also the least expensive and disruptive of all the options.

- Closing Churchill is the only one of these options that can be prototyped, so it makes sense to start there and see how it works.
- Cost and the financial and political impacts of the current virus should, if nothing else, cause a pause in the process until there is a reliable reality check.
- Eliminating train noise is still my number one goal.
- The viaduct is the most expensive and most disruptive alternative. Closing Churchill while fixing Embarcadero and Oregon interchanges with Alma would be the best alternative. The partial underpass is a compromise, and definitely better than the disaster of a viaduct, but provides little real value given the cost and disruption.
- Both partial underpass and viaduct are bad for Palo Alto. 2) Both partial underpass and viaduct are too expensive. 3) Partial underpass is ineffective. 4) Partial underpass is unsafe
- Closing with tunnel is dramatically cheaper than the other two choices. Should money become available to do the partial underpass I'd support that. I just can't see how a city of 66,000 can support an expenditure of \$160M for a single grade crossing.
- I am undecided between partial underpass and closing Churchill. I am against the Viaduct. I saw a viaduct very similar to the one being proposed in a similar neighborhood on Long Island. It is terrible for all except the trains.
- I think a much cheaper option would be to computerize the traffic signals and time them with the trains. The waits at the traffic lights on Churchill might be a little longer during an hour or two of rush hour in the mornings and evenings (maybe not.) The rest of the day, there would be no noticeable change.
- See comments above
- There is no perfect solution for trying to modify something that was never planned for in advance. I think the partial underpass is very clever but admit I have not considered what might be any future problems with such a modification. I do wonder as more and more people are working from home - and quite possibly will be in the future - if the ridership really is going to increase according to the predictions.
- Best solution would be to bury the tracks in a trench or tunnel.
- I am strongly pro on finding a way to make Embarcadero 4 lanes under the tracks and using over/under pass for Paly to shopping center crossing.
- I'm in favor of exploring a partial underpass for peds and bikes, but after we close the crossing.
- This preserves the most throughways for traffic, is safe for bikes and pedestrians and is not an ugly industrial looking viaduct.

- My first preference is partial underpass. I am VEHEMENTLY opposed to a viaduct that will RUIN the aesthetics of the neighborhood.
- This is the option which best provides a solution to all concerned
- This is spending \$\$\$\$\$ for nothing. The traffic reports say fine to close Churchill, it is safer to close and most of the traffic is through traffic from outside PA - they can find another route with mitigations at Embarcadero, etc. STOP trying to build and make Churchill even more unsafe.
- Not in favor of viaduct or closing. I believe there should be as is solution with modified traffic conditions.
- Don't know much about partial underpass but would support if cars go get to Alma

Comments on Question 5:

Many years ago, Castilleja was closed at Park Blvd (by Peers Park) in order to reduce through traffic in the neighborhood. Some have suggested that if Churchill were closed, one way to mitigate access impacts for Southgate residents would be to re-open Castilleja at Peers Park.

IF the city decided to close Churchill, would you be in favor of opening Castilleja at Park Boulevard (by Peers Park) to allow through traffic?

- Prefer to keep car traffic in Southgate to a minimum.
- If it's mostly neighborhood traffic, I would be in favor of opening. There should be a study to determine how much through (non-Southgate) traffic this would encourage.
- More study is required to ensure residents along Mariposa and Castilleja are not impacted
- This would put children going to and from the park and school in danger.
- Let's solve problems one by one. Now we are talking about closing Churchill.
- But this is not preferred.

- Although we should also look at why it was closed: High School traffic to Cal Ave. If it was made a right-turn-only (onto Park), giving us two routes to SB El Camino, that would help.
- I think opening Southgate at Peers Park is a bad idea for the same reasons it was closed in the first place -- through traffic on extremely narrow streets. But if Churchill closes it may be necessary for emergency access to and exit from the neighborhood.
- For trial only. So they served the neighborhood, not as a second way to get to Stanford, etc.
- Don't feel strongly enough/haven't considered the implications deeply to vote - I'll defer to those with stronger views
- I am strongly opposed to through traffic. If you open it up, the neighborhood could experience increased crime as well.
- Absolutely not! The whole point of Southgate and why we bought our home here is because there is no traffic and the kids can play in the street.
- We think a neighborhood route to Oregon would make sense and unlikely to increase through traffic significantly.
- Castilleja is already a bike boulevard. Adding more vehicle traffic would be disastrous.
- Would need more information on this option.
- When that was open (in the 70s), the 1600 block of Mariposa had the highest accident rate in Palo Alto. Cars would pick up speed along Park, zoom around where the barrier is now, and lose control rounding the curve onto Mariposa. The magnolia tree which was in the curb strip in front of 1669 was approx. 2 feet in diameter at the top and one foot in diameter at the bottom due to repeated car impacts. My car, parked in front of my house, was totally sideswiped by another out-of-control car. ... Castilleja could be opened one way out of Southgate, allowing access to Cal Ave for the neighborhood.
- The original reason remains - There will be no thru traffic since Churchill would be closed, so the opening would allow Southgate neighbors to access El Camino easily
- Improvements are needed at Churchill & El Camino - computerized signal and shorter wait for green light at El Camino. A pedestrian overpass may also encourage fewer cars there. Also, allowing U-turns at that intersection so drivers can go out from Southgate on Miramonte, then make a U-turn at Churchill if they want to go southbound on El Camino
- no way, that would make it worse.
- Concern for safety of Peers Park attendees and for residents of Mariposa and Castilleja

- The closure at Peers Park was implemented to prevent people beyond Southgate from using Castilleja as a shortcut to the California Ave business district. Especially now that Castilleja has been designated as a bike boulevard, it would be dangerous to have cars driving through.
- I would favor taking a good look at this and the potential safety impacts of opening the connection. This link is part of a major route to Paly for students and its safety needs to be protected.
- Allowing cars to exit but not enter in order to prevent short-cutting as explained above.
- This would be crucial, as the entire neighborhood would be in gridlock. But it's far better to keep Churchill open, given Paly traffic and other factors.
- It is a bike thoroughfare for Palo Alto High School and it would be detrimental to their safety and the neighborhood in general.
- I would be in favor of opening Castilleja in addition to leaving Churchill open.
- Don't care
- It is inappropriate to address this question until the issue of Churchill is resolved.
- The problem would be teenagers careening through the neighborhood to get to Paly. So, I'd prefer to keep Castilleja closed at Peers park.
- Absolutely not. I was here at the time that was open and then closed. I was one of the teenagers who sped through Southgate almost daily to avoid the traffic at the corner of Churchill and El Camino. Madrono was like a narrow expressway with cars traveling fast. Now to add to the danger of more cars in Southgate -- and there will be -- we have a bike boulevard, a dog park and Peers park is busier with kids on trikes and people walking. It is really nice and safer that that part of the street is closed to traffic.
- Absolutely no. Southgate would be a parallel route running with El Camino; no reason for that.
- Street way too busy with bike and pedestrian traffic to consider this. Even if there were to be restricted parking to minimize choke points the safety factor would be intolerable.
- That idea would turn narrow Mariposa, on which children play, into a thoroughfare. Bad idea. Damages our neighborhood feel and increases danger to our children.
- I would strongly oppose opening Castilleja at Park, as there would likely be significant cut through traffic to Paly
- I have lived in Southgate since 1988 -- long enough to have heard why it was closed. It was closed to protect the children. Drivers going home were cutting through the neighborhood and traveling at high speed past the park and through the neighborhood. So, it was closed to

protect the children. As a consequence, Peers Park is the safest and perhaps the nicest park in Palo Alto.

- But feel this will not be a good choice for traffic. Also, the reason for closing is to cut down traffic near park. Now, there will only be more traffic and not less.
- I recall that the major reason for closing was that people used it as a short-cut through the neighborhood and drove very fast by the park, etc. Perhaps it will not be as inviting to use in this way if Churchill is closed... just don't know.
- Do NOT increase residential traffic.
- Seems like a good idea - at least as a trial. Our narrow streets with parking on both sides could make Castilleja less safe for cyclists if it starts being used for through car traffic.
- I would open it one way, only to exit Southgate, only to turn right onto Park.
- This would create more through traffic in Southgate and it really wouldn't help Southgate homeowners with access to Alma.
- Castilleja has a tremendous amount of bike traffic and is a narrow street - it would have catastrophic consequences.
- Would create non-resident traffic

- I would like a bit more information on this but at least not traffic outside the neighborhood
- Never. This opening will ruin bike experience
- Passage through this "Peers Park portal" would need to be restricted or "cut through" traffic could be a safety concern.
- Re-opening would increase non-residential traffic and reduce safety
- No way. We would not have bought a house here if we thought that was an option.

Final Comments:

- Closing Churchill is the only option that preserves the character of the neighborhood and maintains property value. Opening Castilleja is dangerous for student bicyclists.

- I question the City Council's ability to make a decision (analysis paralysis). This coupled with the budget shortfall with the COVID crisis, it will be a miracle if anything at all gets done. Caltrans rider ship is down over 95% and may not survive the downturn making all of these discussions for not.
- I previously sent an email to the City Council suggesting a practice run closing Churchill in order to see the effect it has on traffic in Palo Alto. Nobody responded.
- The traffic on Churchill has become quite bothersome in the 10 years we have lived here. Making a left turn during most hours (normal non-COVID times) has become very difficult. Street parking sometimes obfuscates view for left turns. That is what makes us prefer Churchill closure, or vote for something that causes some traffic reduction. I am also wary of an expensive viaduct option for cost reasons. I would be fine with closure with traffic mitigation measures, or the partial option.
- Again, I live on Mariposa facing the train track and my family will be negatively impacted if the raised track option is selected.
- Thank you!
- With respect to pushing more cars onto Embarcadero: I think widening it to 4 lanes would be a huge improvement there, drastically reducing the bottleneck that happens (and often spills into the Embarcadero / El Camino intersection).
- Thanks!
- Please do not claim to represent me — you are self-appointed and unelected.
- Partial underpass seems like a good compromise. If Caltrain is resistant to making minor concessions to make this possible in its best design, can Stanford be leveraged to exert pressure on Caltrain in this regard?
- If Churchill is closed, addressing safety for bikes/peds crossing Alma/entering, exiting Paly would be optimal. Also, isn't there a way to close Churchill yet retain access for emergency vehicles or select opening of the street using removable/automatic hydraulic bollards? That might allow Churchill to remain open on weekends.
- I hope the questionnaire is objective and possibly reviewed by a third party to reduce any possible bias. Thank you.
- I highly recommend that the survey results be audited by a 3rd part to ensure fairness. Furthermore, every effort should be made to survey ALL Southgate residents as individuals, rather than some selected households.
- XCAP has a ton of information on all of these items, which should be linked to this survey, so that people can see the information on each of the options. I do like the fact that you asked people if they were informed or not.

- I do think improvements to enhance capacity at Embarcadero will be needed. This should include a pedestrian overpass that connects Paly to Town & Country so that traffic signal can be eliminated. Again, Stanford should be involved and contribute to solving traffic problems on Embarcadero and Churchill.
- Thank you for trying to reach out to ALL Southgate residents.
- While I appreciate the democratic, inclusive, and thorough process Palo Alto has undertaken, I'm concerned now that we'll miss out on precious regional, state, and federal funding if we don't make a decision quickly.
- I want to emphasize that there needs to be a pause in the process until the impacts of the current shut downs are better understood.
- I thank the committee for your work on this important matter. I would appreciate a response to my survey answers from as many of the committee members as would be gracious enough to write me. david664422@yahoo.com. 660-650-3303
- Thank you for doing this. I hope we leave Churchill open. Jeannine Olson
- Thank you for helping all of us keep abreast of this important matter. And great survey -- concise and to the point. And visually appealing, too! Well done!
- Thanks for gathering this data.
- Thank you for your hard and thoughtful work. I know this has not been an easy job. I still think we have solutions that are not that great. I understand there are constraints. The partial closure has the most promise but details have to be worked out better such as the right angle turn out of the tunnel for bikes, separating bikes and pedestrians, and figuring out how not to make it so far out of the way if you are walking like from Southgate to Walter Hayes, with a young child and possibly pushing a stroller to get a kid to school in the morning.
- We live on Castilleja mid- second block. With the bike traffic from non-Paly High bikers, who apparently believe Castilleja is a bike freeway, we have to be ultra-careful backing out of the driveway at any time of the day or night. Some bikers believe they have the right-of-way irrespective of the fact that those backing out cannot always see them.
- The only safe bike option for closing Churchill is the Kellogg underpass.
- Please send this survey to all of Nextdoor Southgate.
- Thanks to all involved. It's important to keep neighbors informed.
- The prudent thing to do at this time is nothing. At a time when mass transit ridership is declining in every metropolitan area in the country including Los Angeles, Caltrain's projection of tripling ridership was amazingly optimistic, and reflected pre-COVID19 thinking.

In the last 30 years Silicon Valley has gone through three boom and bust cycles, and it is at the end of the third boom. Just a few years ago, faced with declining ridership, Caltrain was in severe distress. As this tech expansion has reached maturity Caltrain ridership had actually started to decline in the months prior to COVID19. We may not know what the post pandemic world will look like, but we can rest assured that it will be very different, and sitting on Caltrain may well be the least desirable work option, so Caltrain's future is largely unknown. Therefore, the safest thing at this time is to do nothing until we can better visualize Silicon Valley's future work environment and transportation requirements.

- Thank you for all the wonderful work!
- I think COVID is making everyone rethink how they work. Is it possible that there will be long-term reductions in traffic anyway? Less people commuting, fewer trains needed in general? Has this been discussed as part of future planning?
- Thank you for keeping Southgate needs in the discussion!
- I would like the Caltrain to provide updated estimates of ridership projections in a post-COVID world. The train goes through our backyard and, since March, every train is almost empty. The idea of increasing the number of trains seems highly unnecessary at this point. And given how this virus is transmitted, I do not see ridership growing at a rate that would justify a 4x increase in the number of trains.
- The harm to the community of closing Churchill is real and substantial. The benefit is at best questionable.
- Let's not spend millions of taxpayer funds for something we don't need. Close Churchill.
- RE: "Peers Park passage": One possible traffic control might be to place a stanchion in the middle of the road that is lowered by a remote control similar to a garage door opener. The remote control could be available only to Southgate residents for a fee to offset costs to the City.
- Thanks so much for highlighting the upcoming XCAP meeting (and making sure everyone is aware of Survey 2.0). The XCAP meetings have been held every week for the past 6-7 weeks and they continue to be committed to trying to have a recommendation for the City Council in the next few months. Of course, this is an extremely complicated and emotional issue—it is going to be difficult for any group, including XCAP, to make a strong recommendation. Time will tell. Also, the City Council is not beholden to take the recommendation of the XCAP and ultimately, any decision by City Council is highly likely to eventually go to the voters. So long road ahead. A small group has regularly attended the XCAP meetings (incl myself). My personal summary of the status thus far: Viaduct: The most expensive (\$300-\$400M) of the three options and while it is the only option that preserves all the vehicular traffic crossings in its current form (w/o a pesky train to interrupt the flow), it also has the worst traffic Level Of Service (LOS) rating of the three options (D/E letter grade, where A is best and F is worst). It's also fairly clear that XCAP is intimately aware that no one in the vicinity (Southgate & Old Palo Alto) is advocating for this option—it's very unpopular. While diligence is key to keep

this one from becoming a reality, this one really seems like an extremely unlikely choice.

Partial Underpass: A wee bit more than half the cost of the Viaduct (\$160-200M), this late arriving option is quite complicated. It preserves *some* of the vehicular crossings at Churchill/Alma, eliminates others and creates some new barriers for still others (e.g. Mariposa can no longer exit onto Churchill, Old Palo Alto no longer has a protected left turn onto Alma southbound). According to the traffic report, it has the best LOS rating of the three options (B/C). This option is also expected to require the taking of a small bit of land from private property (called a “sliver”) as well as quite a bit of land from Paly and an allowance from Caltrain land. Caltrain has very clearly stated that they will not give up this allowance.

Closure + Mitigations: At less than one third the cost of the Partial Underpass (\$50-65M), the majority of the cost comes not from closing Churchill but from fixing the massively broken El Camino/Embarcadero, Alma/Embarcadero and Alma/Oregon Expwy crossings. The traffic study rates this very close to the same LOS as the Partial Underpass (C/C). Most of the concerns about this option have been addressed (traffic implications to other roadways – traffic analysis of the closure + mitigations; safety – clear message from both Fire and Police that this will not affect response times). However, there continues to be a vocal opposition, which primarily cites concerns about both traffic and safety. Few other points to help bring folks up to speed: In the Survey 2.0, you’ll note that there is a question about re-opening of the Peers Park exit from Southgate (Castilleja/Park Blvd), which was closed in the early 70’s (it was a *hotly* contested topic at the time). The Peers Park opening has been suggested by various members of the public as a potential alleviation for Southgate residents to open a secondary path to Oregon Expwy other than El Camino in the event of Churchill closure. It has never been on any proposal by the City Council, XCAP or any other municipal group. Similar to 1972, the opening of Peers would likely be a highly contentious topic and since it’s not really needed/relevant to the rail crossings, is highly unlikely to be placed on any decision matrix anytime in the near future. Both the Council and XCAP are pretty weary and I’d be surprised if they entertained any options not directly impacting the rail crossings, especially contentious ones. However, by placing the question on the Survey 2.0, it definitely feeds the fears of a Closure by anyone in the Southgate or Evergreen Park neighborhoods. The local debate has gotten a bit out of hand at times. Signs were made opposing Churchill Closure (using a simplified scare message: where do all the cars go?) and illegally put onto private property w/o owner permission along Churchill Ave as well as illegally put onto public land (Paly)—in the middle of the night. You can imagine how you’d feel if you woke up and someone had put a sign on your front lawn or across the street on public land, especially after having been very vocal in opposition to the message on the sign. Many of the residents along Churchill don’t have to imagine. In the last XCAP, it was discovered that none of the traffic studies done by the contracting firm (Hexagon) considered any traffic “inducement”, except for the Closure. Inducement is the concept of more traffic moving to a new route because either the old route has gotten worse or a new route has gotten better. For instance, in the case of Churchill Closure, Hexagon definitely studied the inducement of additional traffic on both Embarcadero and Oregon Expwy—cuz that traffic can no longer travel down Churchill. However, in the case of both the Viaduct and the Partial Underpass, no study was done to assess if improved travel along Churchill would increase the amount of traffic along Churchill. Instead, the firm assessed the existing and projected traffic volumes, assuming no add’l traffic was pulled from any of the surrounding areas. The firm said inducement is typically not required as most folks are trying to get somewhere and are unlikely to “bypass” just to save a few minutes. However, as their own study shows, roughly 70% of all traffic on Churchill is doing just that—it is trying to bypass from El Camino to

Alma/Embarcadero or vice versa. Since Churchill dead-ends at Stanford and goes into a slow neighborhood to dead-end on Embarcadero on the other side, most of the traffic is not using it as a destination but as a bypass or cutoff. Lastly, it's unclear if any of this will really matter given the current state of Caltrain, the State and our Nation. This has been regularly pointed out by members of the public in both City Council and XCAP meetings. Unfortunately, both the City Council and XCAP aren't chartered with telling Caltrain and the State that their plans are garbage and simply halting all efforts to evaluate options; they are required to proceed until such a time as the electrification plans are halted by a higher power. If that does come to pass, then it will just have been a painful and neighborhood-splitting exercise in city-wide traffic planning. P.S. I strongly believe in full disclosure of position/bias in any survey or summary: I'm in support of the Closure + Mitigations option in the event that the City has to eliminate the at-grade rail crossing. Hopefully that helps you assess your own take on my take. It would have been great if the "Southgate Neighborhood Committee on the Churchill Rail Crossing", which sponsors the Survey 2.0, had also disclosed their position/bias. Or, even better, invited a diversity of opinion into the "Neighborhood Committee".

Dear Southgate residents,

We have created a new survey on the redesign of the Churchill rail crossing so that we can provide YOUR input to the City of Palo Alto. Please take a moment to answer this survey which will come in a separate email shortly.

For context, we've provided a brief review of the current state of the decision-making process and a summary of the options.

Decision-making Process

As you may know, the City of Palo Alto is examining options to modify Caltrain crossings in Palo Alto in anticipation of substantial increases in Caltrain traffic due to Caltrain's long term business and service plan. Ultimately, the goal is to separate pedestrian, bike, and car traffic from Caltrain at each intersection (Churchill, East Meadow and Charleston). The Extended Community Action Panel or [XCAP](#), a committee composed mainly of Palo Alto residents, is charged with making a "consensus recommendation" to City Council, who will make the ultimate decisions about which designs to pursue. Despite interruptions caused by covid-19, XCAP have recently resumed their analyses and will **begin deliberations on Churchill in August**, with **recommendations to City Council sometime this fall**.

While it may be hard to maintain a sense of urgency about the rail crossing decision, given the state of the economy and general uncertainty about the future, Caltrain is going ahead with both electrification and its plans to expand commuter rail service, even if progress slows in the short term. In addition, City Staff have stressed that the **City must select and prepare an alternative for each crossing in order to avoid forfeiting funds when they do become available** from county, state, and federal sources.

Summary of Options

Due to its proximity to Southgate and the importance of this decision to our neighborhood, this summary focuses only on the options for the Churchill crossing. You can see available materials related to all options for Palo Alto (including animations, renderings, financial estimates and other data) [here](#). The choices for the Churchill crossing have been reduced to three (follow the links to see relevant materials):

- **Option 1: Close Churchill:** Churchill would be permanently closed at the tracks to vehicle traffic, with a tunnel under Alma for bikes and pedestrians. This option would prevent access by car to Alma from Southgate; drivers would exit the neighborhood onto El Camino for all trips. In addition, 9500 cars per day would be diverted to other east-west routes, most likely Embarcadero and Oregon. On the basis of a recent [study](#), traffic consultants propose changes to the Embarcadero-Alma intersection, including additional lights on both roads, to mitigate the increase in traffic.
 - **Note:** As a possible mitigation for the travel restrictions in and out of the neighborhood, some neighborhood residents have mentioned the possibility of **re-opening the road at Peers Park**. That modification is not currently a part of the City's proposal for Churchill closure, but we will seek your input on the idea in the survey.

See the [factsheet](#) for images, cost, engineering detail, and assessment against City Council criteria. Follow these links ([Tunnel 1](#), [Tunnel 2](#) for images of what the changes may look like.

- **Option 2: Viaduct:** This alternative raises the train above the road on a concrete structure, allowing bicycle, pedestrian, and car traffic to pass underneath. Vehicle traffic, including Southgate drivers, will continue to have the same access to both Alma and Churchill East that exists now. Bicycle and pedestrian traffic remain on the road, but they will be able to cross on their own signal while cars wait, as they do now at the Homer/Alma intersection.

See the [factsheet](#) for images, cost, engineering detail, and assessment against City Council criteria. To see a plan elevation of the viaduct, click [here](#). Visit this [link](#) to see the construction process.

- **Option 3: Partial Underpass:** Train tracks stay "at grade" (at the same level they are now), while two lanes of Churchill west of Alma descend to carry traffic beneath the tracks to connect with Alma, which would also be partially lowered. Churchill East would remain at grade, as would two northbound lanes of Alma. The most common car movements would be maintained, but there would be some restrictions:
 - Southgate residents, as well as other drivers from El Camino, continue to have access to both north- and southbound Alma. However, vehicles will not be able to cross Alma to travel along Churchill, in either direction.
 - Westbound traffic traveling on Churchill east of Alma are only allowed to turn right (north) onto Alma.
 - North and southbound traffic on Alma would be able to turn west onto Churchill toward El Camino; however only northbound Alma traffic would be allowed to turn east onto Churchill.

Bicycle and pedestrian traffic currently using Churchill would be rerouted to cross Alma via a tunnel, either at Kellogg (connecting to the bicycle lane behind Paly) or at Seale (connecting to Park Blvd and Castilleja at Peers Park). Northbound bike and pedestrian traffic to and from Southgate would use a bike bridge over the underpass to connect with the bike lane behind Paly.

Drawings for the partial underpass are still under development, but you can see preliminary drawings and some images [here](#). In addition, see the recently created [factsheet](#) (currently coupled with the factsheet for the proposed underpass for Charleston-Meadow) for images, cost, engineering detail, and assessment against City Council criteria.

Each of these options have pros and cons. All have been evaluated by an engineering firm hired by the City of Palo Alto and deemed viable. XCAP, who have been preoccupied with the evaluation process, are eager for community input.

In the email to follow, you will receive a brief survey - we are seeking your input. We will share the results with everyone who participates, as well as with City Council, Staff, and XCAP.

Thank you
Southgate Neighborhood Committee on the Churchill Rail Crossing
Steve Carlson
Eileen Fagan
Susan Newman
Prasad Chakka
Jeanne Chin
Lisa Nissim
Renee Kolas
Karen Hohner
Nancy Madison
and others

Hello Southgate Neighbor Survey Participants,

Thank you for your participation in the online survey of the Southgate neighborhood regarding the proposed changes to the rail crossing at Churchill. We conducted the survey to provide input to the XCAP and City Council as they consider this important decision. As promised, we are sharing the results with all survey respondents ahead of our report to the City. Participation was strong throughout the neighborhood, totaling 138 individual responses from 122 households.

Methodology

The survey was offered to all Southgate residents and available from July 23rd - August 3rd, 2020. Survey participants were invited by email, by flyers dropped on every doorstep, and through a post on Nextdoor Southgate. Prior to receiving the survey, each participant received an email update on the current grade separation options (with links to the factsheets, renderings, and the XCAP page on connectingpaloalto.com). Respondents were asked to share their street address so that neighborhood penetration could be tracked, and a neighborhood zoning map was used to verify address locations. The goal was to provide objective information and pose objective questions in order to allow all residents in the neighborhood a chance to provide informed input.

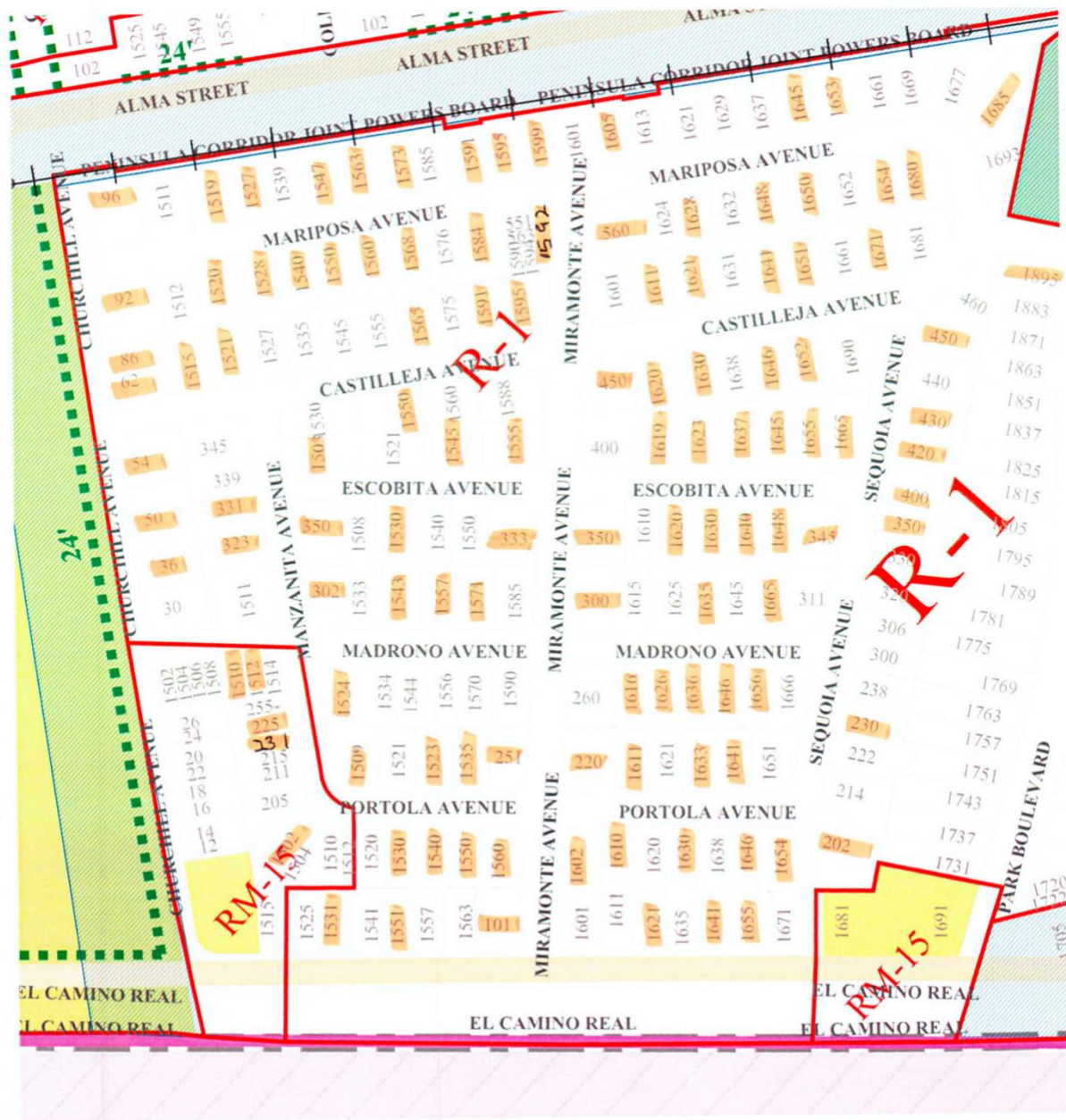
Penetration

Responses were received from **59% of all households** in Southgate, with representation by street as below:

Street	# Houses	Household responses	% of Houses with at least one response	
Churchill*	16	7	44%	
Mariposa	41	25	61%	excludes 1 unoccupied house
Castilleja Ave	28	16	57%	excludes 1 unoccupied house
Escobita Ave	19	14	74%	
Madrono	26	15	58%	excludes 4 unoccupied houses
Portola	25	16	64%	
El Camino	13	5	38%	
Manzanita	12	7	58%	
Miramonte	10	8	80%	
Sequoia	17	8	47%	excludes 1 unoccupied house
Park	1	1	100%	
Total	208	122	59%	

* 88% response rate if excluding 8 duplexes near El Camino which did not respond to outreach

Household Survey Participants in Orange



SOUTHGATE NEIGHBORHOOD

Responses per household

We intended the survey to record one response per household, but more than one response was offered if there were differences of opinion within the household. In addition, there were a small number of households for whom we had two people on an initial email list, as well as a small number of new respondents who requested and received two surveys. In the end, 12% of all Southgate completed two surveys. On Churchill and Mariposa Avenues, 11% of houses had dual participants, compared with 12% for all other streets combined.

Despite outreach attempts to ALL residents in the Southgate neighborhood, inhabitants of apartments and duplexes did not respond at the same level as those in single-family homes. As an example, none of the 8 duplexes on Churchill responded to flyers or to the Nextdoor post. We speculate that as renters, these residents may be less invested in the long-term impacts of the changes at the Churchill intersection.

Results

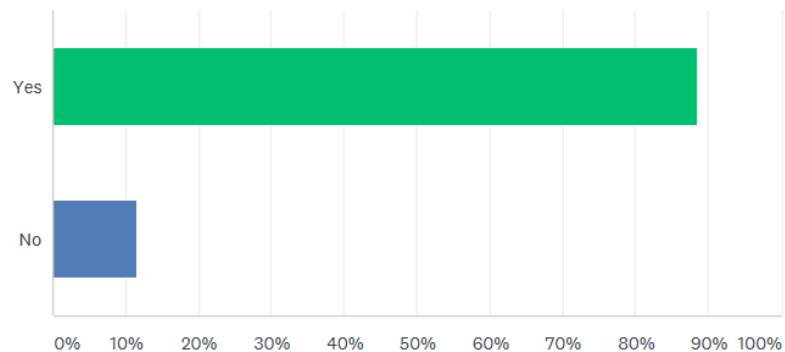
For full transparency, results are reported directly out of the SurveyMonkey tool. Several questions had comments fields; all comments are being shared in the attachment to this email for reference. Please feel free to read them.

Results are below:

Question 1:

Have you kept up with the discussion of the City’s plan to make a significant change to the Churchill intersection (in order to separate the train tracks from the road)?

Answered: 138 Skipped: 0

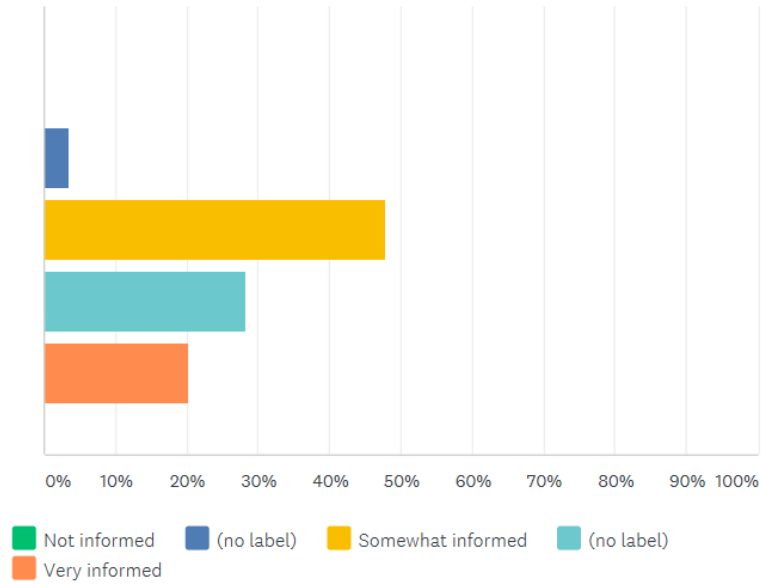


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	88.41%	122
No	11.59%	16
TOTAL		138

Question 2:

How informed do you feel you are on this issue?

Answered: 138 Skipped: 0



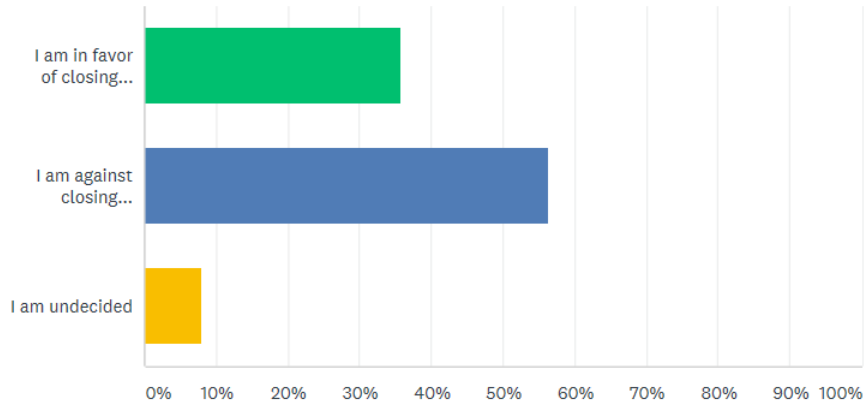
	NOT INFORMED	(NO LABEL)	SOMEWHAT INFORMED	(NO LABEL)	VERY INFORMED	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	0.00% 0	3.62% 5	47.83% 66	28.26% 39	20.29% 28	138	3.65

This is a 5 point scale; see table above for the detail. 96% feel they are somewhat to very informed on this issue.

Question 3:

Based on your current knowledge, what is your opinion about closing Churchill?

Answered: 137 Skipped: 1



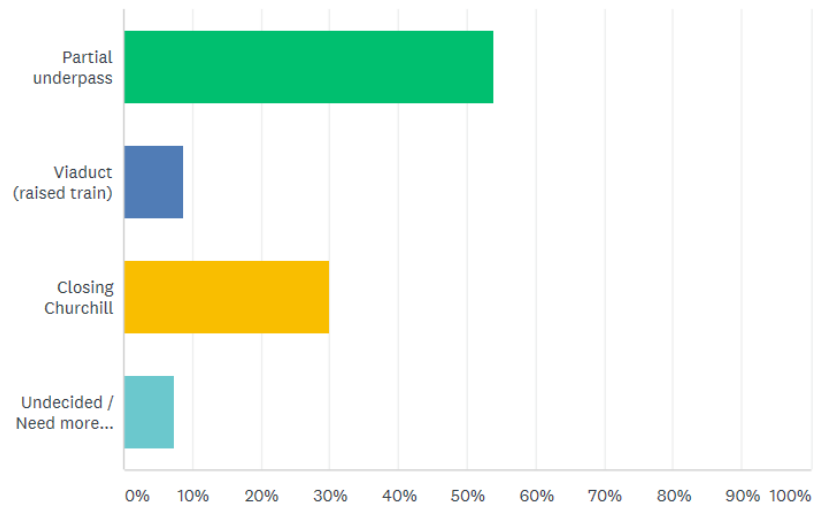
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ I am in favor of closing Churchill	35.77% 49
▼ I am against closing Churchill	56.20% 77
▼ I am undecided	8.03% 11
TOTAL	137

[Comments \(45\)](#)

Question 4:

Originally, there were two primary options on the table: closing Churchill or a Viaduct (raised platform for the train). Now, there is a third option (a partial underpass) which is also under evaluation. Of the potential options on the table (based on my current knowledge), I am most in favor of

Answered: 137 Skipped: 1



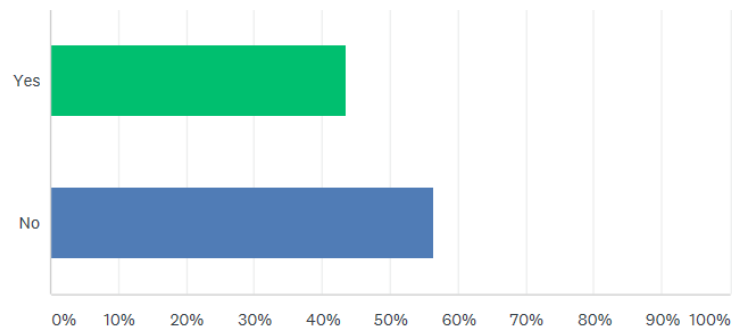
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Partial underpass	54.01% 74
Viaduct (raised train)	8.76% 12
Closing Churchill	29.93% 41
Undecided / Need more information	7.30% 10
TOTAL	137

[Comments \(39\)](#)

Question 5:

Many years ago, Castilleja was closed at Park Blvd (by Peers Park) in order to reduce through traffic in the neighborhood. Some have suggested that if Churchill were closed, one way to mitigate access impacts for Southgate residents would be to re-open Castilleja at Peers Park. IF the city decided to close Churchill, would you be in favor of opening Castilleja at Park Boulevard (by Peers Park) to allow through traffic?

Answered: 133 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Yes	43.61%	58
▼ No	56.39%	75
TOTAL		133

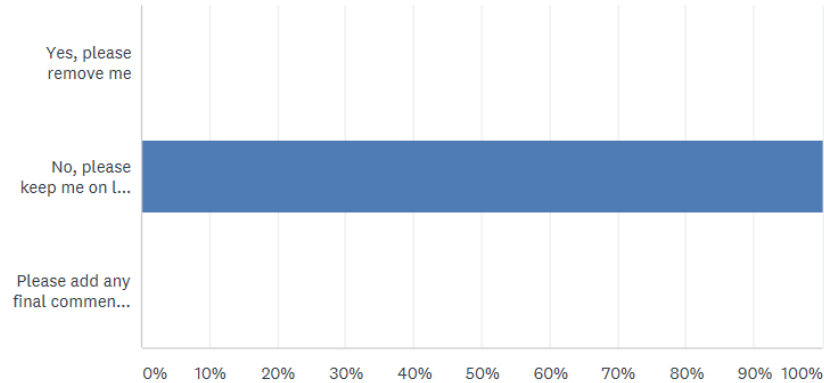
[Comments \(50\)](#)

Note: The comments to Question 5 include a historical perspective on this issue from some long-term residents. To view them, see the Comments attachment.

Question 6:

I would like to be removed from this email list

Answered: 137 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Yes, please remove me	0.00% 0
▼ No, please keep me on list and keep me posted	100.00% 137
▼ Please add any final comments here	Responses 0.00% 0
TOTAL	137

Note: There is significant engagement on this issue, and a desire to stay informed

We hope you find this summary clear and informative. XCAP and City Council will be provided these survey results as well as all of your comments.

We welcome any questions regarding methodology. In their comments, some participants suggested an audit of the results; we are glad to export the results from SurveyMonkey (minus identifying information) for anyone wishing to do so.

Also, given that there was some concern with our "Southgate Committee" signature, we will just sign our names here.

Many thanks,
Steve Carlson
Susan Newman
Eileen Fagan
Lisa Nissim
Karen Hohner

From: [Steve Carlson](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [Wilson, Sarah](#); [Nadia Naik](#); [Gmail](#); [Eileen Fagan](#)
Subject: Southgate Survey Summary for XCAP
Date: Monday, August 10, 2020 4:56:35 PM
Attachments: [XCAP Southgate Survey Results Aug 2020 FINAL.pdf.pdf](#)
[Email sent to all Southgate Survey Participants.docx](#)
[Southgate Neighbor Survey Results Summary.pdf](#)
[Comments of Survey Participants Southgate July 2020.pdf](#)

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

Hi XCAP,

As you may be aware, a group of us have completed a re-survey of the Southgate Neighborhood in order to provide information to the XCAP committee as you prepare for final deliberations. We hope this is helpful in terms providing useful information to the committee.

Ahead of being sent the survey, all participants were provided with an email updating of the Churchill intersection options (with appropriate links to connectingpal Alto.org). Knowing that there is diversity of opinion in our neighborhood, our goal was to be as objective as possible in presenting the options and soliciting feedback.

The survey asked 4 questions (paraphrased here)

- How informed are you?
- Are you in favor of closing Churchill (Yes/No/Unsure)?
- Based on your current knowledge of the three options, which is your first choice?
- IF Churchill was closed, would you favor re-opening Castilleja at Peers Park?

The following documents are attached:

- 1) a summary slide deck, which we will look forward to sharing at this week's XCAP meeting
- 2) a copy of the email which was sent to each participant prior to sending the survey
- 2) the survey results (as shared with the neighborhood participants)
- 3) a compilation of the comments participants made (with links directly to any question of interest)

Thanks much
Steve Carlson

From: [Gary Lindgren](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Mitigation Measures for Closing Churchill Ave.
Date: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 2:14:23 PM

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

Hello XCAP Committee,

The Mitigation measures for closing Churchill looks very interesting in the latest version of the Traffic Report. Specifically the pictures and drawing for Alma at Embarcadero. Adding another lane on Alma crossing Embarcadero is a very good idea. However just adding that lane is not all that simple. Adding that lane to the present bridge would mean that the already 'low clearance' would get even lower and not acceptable. What this means is that the entire bridge for Alma and the rail tracks needs to be replaced. In doing so, the new structure should have 2 lanes both ways for Embarcadero going under the tracks and Alma. The costs for closing Churchill should then have the cost for replacing the Embarcadero underpass added to the total cost.

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/>

[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

From: [Inder Monga](#)
To: [Nadia Naik](#); [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#); [Shikada, Ed](#); [Kamhi, Philip](#); gblack@hextrans.com
Cc: [Council, City](#); [Chacon, Michael](#); [Mary](#); [Reshma Singh](#); [Gaines, Chantal](#)
Subject: Proposed correction of the final draft traffic report
Date: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 8:04:26 PM

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

Dear Nadia, XCAP, Gary, Ed, and Philip,

We appreciate the updated traffic report fixing the comments received by many members of the public (Link from https://connectingpaloalto.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/2020-08-12_XCAP-Agenda.pdf). We reviewed with interest the updated Figure 8 and the corresponding text on Page 47 and Page 48. In fact, I especially point to one of the paragraphs dealing with the Alma #1, #2, #3 intersections as reproduced verbatim from the report below:

"Note that Figure 8 shows a conceptual design of potential improvements at the Embarcadero Road and Alma Street interchange. If this project were to be pursued, many design details would need to be worked out with regard to maintaining access to existing residential driveways on Embarcadero Road, Kingsley Street, High Street, and the Embarcadero slip ramp."

As had been pointed out to Meghan (ex-XCAP member), and to Hexagon almost six months ago, the main issue with this design is not only about maintaining access to existing residential driveways, but also eliminating the on-street parking that exists today both on High Street and Embarcadero slip road, plus interfering with safe access to the underbridge through the steps. We actually measured the Embarcadero Slip Road again the day before, and there is less than 24' of space to the curb, contrary to indicated in the diagram Figure 8, even if you get rid of on-street parking thus requiring further engineering or compromises to the street.

This road is also used extensively by parents to drop off and pick up high-school kids who then walk to Palo Alto High School. The Embarcadero slip road is not wide enough to allow two way lanes, parking, and a shoulder along the underpass. The design to add the light on alma, left-turn and right-turn lanes added to Embarcadero Slip Road is going to eliminate the on-street parking and safe access for several residences, exacerbate the traffic jam in the mornings and afternoons, and importantly, be dangerous for the kids getting dropped off.

We believed we had an agreement to update the report to address the above points. By ignoring the issues pointed out repeatedly, it is concerning to us that there is a systematic neglect of the voice of the residents of Embarcadero Road, Kingsley Street, High Street, and the Embarcadero slip ramp. We would strongly request Hexagon, XCAP and the City staff to remedy this.

Our suggested wording of that paragraph is:

*"Note that Figure 8 shows a conceptual design of potential improvements at the Embarcadero Road and Alma Street interchange. If this project were to be pursued, many design details and **mitigations** would need to be worked out with regard to maintaining access to existing residential driveways, **on-street parking, safety risks in accessing the underbridge on***

Embarcadero, as well as, potential traffic congestion during the peak times due to school drop off and pick ups on Embarcadero Road, Kingsley Street, High Street, and the Embarcadero slip ramp."

Best regards, and look forward to a productive XCAP meeting this Wednesday,

Inder Monga

Reshma Singh

Michael Chacon

Mary Chacon

From: [safety first](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Safety Issues - New: Churchill Partial Underpass
Date: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 7:54:39 PM

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

There are a few serious safety issues regarding the proposed Tunnel at Kellogg that seem to be glossed over...

First Point: Castilleja Cars + Paly Bikes/Peds together = BAD

Castilleja has a lot of car traffic. Most Castilleja students seem to commute by car. Many of these cars use Kellogg from Castilleja to head north on Alma in the morning and afternoons. Kellogg backs up during peak times because of this. Paly has a lot of bicyclists and pedestrians during the same exact peak times. Putting Paly kids and Castilleja cars on a collision course seems like a bad idea. The tunnel in the middle of the road combined with lots of bicyclists who often don't stop at stop signs combined with Castilleja car traffic all on the same path/road will be unsafe.

Second Point: Sidewalk on Alma adjacent to Alma Cars = VERY BAD

In the renderings it looks like you want to get rid of the green strip on alma to make room for another lane of alma traffic.

This means running the sidewalk on alma right next to cars for 4 blocks. Are we really proposing putting a sidewalk where children walk 0 feet away from cars and box trucks that reach 50mph? Anyone who has walked on the alma sidewalk crossing over embarcadero can tell you it's scary to be right next to the road. And that is just a short section with a fairly wide adjacent car lane. The proposal looks like a narrow car lane immediately next to the sidewalk for 4 blocks. That won't be safe. Bicycles also do ride on alma's sidewalk, which usually forces pedestrians into the green strip when crossing paths.

It's also unsafe to propose running a 5th lane of alma closer to homes, and yards. There are city codes for setbacks for a reason.

I can't think of anywhere in palo alto where 40-50 mph car traffic is run that close to homes.

also to note. removing the old trees on alma's green strip would be very unsightly

Third point: 5 Car Lanes of Alma 2 blocks before narrowed Embarcadero crossing (and 25mph area after) = BAD

Although there is talk of changes to Embarcadero, right now alma is 3 lanes at embarcadero. (2 lanes southbound and 1 lane northbound here)

It's odd to expand Alma northbound to 3 lanes in a location 1 block before it merges down to 1 lane and then becomes a 25 mph zone immediately north of embarcadero. Merges frequently become a pinch point during peak traffic times. Going from 2 NB lanes to 3 NB lanes, and down to 2 and then 1 NB lane all within 5 blocks at 40mph could be a merging disaster.

From: [Shaila Sadrozinski](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#); [Council, City](#)
Subject: Southgate survey regarding Churchill rail crossing
Date: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 9:35:38 AM

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

Dear Members of XCAP and City Council,

I am concerned about the results of a survey conducted in Southgate that will soon be shared with you. Data was gathered by a group calling itself the *Southgate Committee on the Churchill Rail Crossing*. In fact, it was not an elected committee, nor does it represent the Southgate neighborhood: the members of this group, though they do not disclose the fact, are composed solely of residents opposed to closing Churchill at the rail crossing.

Because of their bias, and the fact that they did not consult others with differing points of view, the questions they asked, and the way they were framed on the survey are tilted to support their preference. Furthermore, a breakdown by street on percentage of participants, reveals that the highest participation was on streets (Escobita and Miramonte) where members of this group live.

Since my home is on Churchill Ave, I am for the closure of Churchill. The two other options will result in an increase of traffic on Churchill (most of which is not neighborhood traffic), since it will become easier than at present to cross the tracks.

The argument that with closure of Churchill, the Southgate neighborhood will be cut off from the rest of Palo Alto is weak -- it will not be any more cut off than College Terrace or Evergreen Park; it also applies only to residents in cars: the closure will be accompanied by a bicycle/pedestrian underpass giving free access, much like the underpasses at Homer and California Avenues.

While the viaduct or partial underpass will every day adversely affect residents on Churchill and Mariposa, the closure of Churchill will result in a less-than-5-minute inconvenience for residents when they want to access Alma by car. For this minor inconvenience, is it worth spending the huge sums of money needed to construct the viaduct or the partial underpass and increase Churchill Avenue's role as a thoroughfare?

Shaila Sadrozinski, 62 Churchill Avenue

From: [J Stinson](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [Aileen Lee](#)
Subject: Churchill Crossing Document inconsistencies
Date: Wednesday, August 12, 2020 12:58:38 PM

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

Dear XCAP members,
Thank you again for your continued work :)

Few things noticed in a perusal of the documents planned for discussion today (12 August):

[Matrix](#)

- Row Q (Caltrain Right-of-way Acquisition): My understanding from a previous XCAP meeting was that the Underpass option required a permanent right-of-way encroachment; the text for this option makes it sound like it's only during construction

[XCAP Draft Document](#) (Churchill/Embarcadero section)

- Section A (Facilitate movement): This appears to have been copied from Charleston/Meadow section. I would assume that the Viaduct option would be the only one that keeps bike/pedestrian fully at grade

- Section E (Funding): I would assume that this section simply has not yet been filled out, as there is a substantial difference in cost between the three options

- Section I, Item 2 (Visual changes, Closure Option): Is this intended to be a third option for Closure (raising the rail to create an at-grade ped/cyclist crossing)? It would seem that this introduces a lot of other impacts on things such as train construction and private property.

- Section J (Minimize disruption during Construction): This summary is not consistent with the [Matrix](#), nor with common sense. The creation of a Viaduct will be at least as disruptive as the Underpass and likely more--both of which are more disruptive than Closure.

Thanks,
Jason Stinson

From: [Sally Keyes](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#); [Council, City](#)
Subject: Churchill Train Crossing
Date: Wednesday, August 12, 2020 9:51:30 AM

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

Dear Members of XCAP and City Council,

We are concerned about the results of a survey conducted in Southgate that is being shared with all of you. Data was gathered by a group calling itself the *Southgate Committee on the Churchill Rail Crossing*. In fact, it was not an elected committee of Southgate residents, nor does it represent the Southgate neighborhood.

In fact, a fair number of us did not receive an email regarding this survey from this group. Their email was sent to only a portion of Southgate residents and individuals receiving this email were encouraged to forward to other Southgate residents. Since this group's primary focus is to *not* close Churchill, one can reasonably assume that the majority of recipients were like minded in their desire to keep Churchill open.

Additionally, we heard from a neighbor that they requested two surveys, one for each household member. He was informed that there was only one survey per household. However, another neighbor informed other Southgate residents that his household received two surveys, one per adult in the home.

This inconsistency, in our opinion, makes this survey invalid. This issue was somewhat addressed by remarks from this group of residents when they stated that a household could have more than one survey if there were differing opinions. Who is to say whether there really were differing opinions or not and how consistently this statement holds true.

It was refreshing to see that this survey shows that Southgate residents, in general, do not wish to have the viaduct. Thank goodness! A viaduct, in our opinion, is an awful choice.

As to the partial underpass, we believe that the survey does not show a preponderance of support for the overpass vs. the closure of Churchill. Thus, we believe that looking at cost and quality of life for Palo Alto residents are two crucial aspects for XCAP and City Council.

Just a note, we originally responded for the partial underpass and were undecided regarding Churchill. However, upon looking more carefully at the details of the construction of this partial underpass and its massive size as well as its impact on Old Palo Alto, Southgate, and the community

feel of the City, we support the closure of Churchill Avenue over the partial underpass.

Richard and Sally Keyes
Mariposa Avenue

From: [Steve Carlson](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [Wilson, Sarah](#); [Eileen Fagan](#)
Subject: Updated Presentation PDF
Date: Wednesday, August 12, 2020 8:56:08 AM
Attachments: [XCAP Southgate Survey Results Aug 2020 FINAL.pdf](#)

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

Hi XCAP,
This is the updated/final PDF of our presentation for the XCAP meeting today
Thanks
Steve Carlson

Southgate Survey Results on Churchill Rail Crossing options

August 11, 2020

Survey Methodology

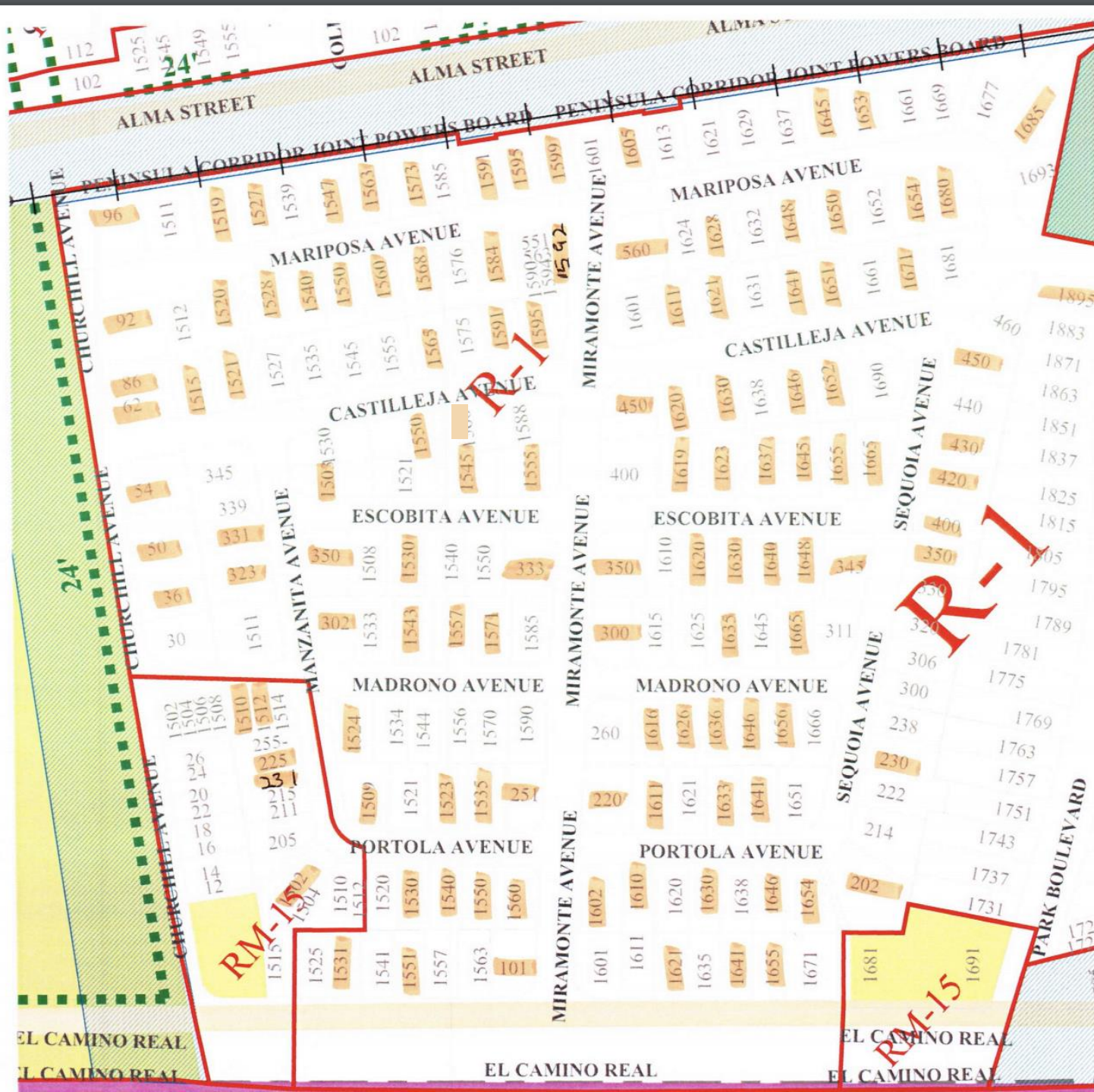
- Survey was offered via SurveyMonkey to **ALL Southgate residents** by **email**, by **flyers dropped on every doorstep**, and via **Nextdoor** Southgate.
- Respondents shared their street addresses so that neighborhood penetration could be tracked, and a neighborhood zoning map was used to verify address locations.
- Survey was open **July 23rd - August 3rd, 2020**.
- Prior to receiving the survey, **each participant received an email update on the current grade separation options** with links to factsheets, renderings, and analyses available on www.connectingpaloalto.com
- We shared the survey results directly from SurveyMonkey along with the breakdown of participation by street and the zoning map showing who participated in the survey

Street	# Houses	Household responses	% of Houses with at least one response
Churchill*	16	7	44% *
Mariposa	41	25	61%
Castilleja Ave	28	16	57%
Escobita Ave	19	14	74%
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El Camino	13	5	38%
Manzanita	12	7	58%
Miramonte	10	8	80%
Sequoia	17	8	47%
Park	1	1	100%
Total	208 *	122	59%

59% of all households in Southgate responded to the survey

* 88% response rate if excluding 8 duplexes near El Camino which did not respond to outreach

* 7 unoccupied houses (for sale or rent) were excluded throughout the neighborhood



Household
Survey
Participants in
Orange:

122 households

**138 individual
responses**

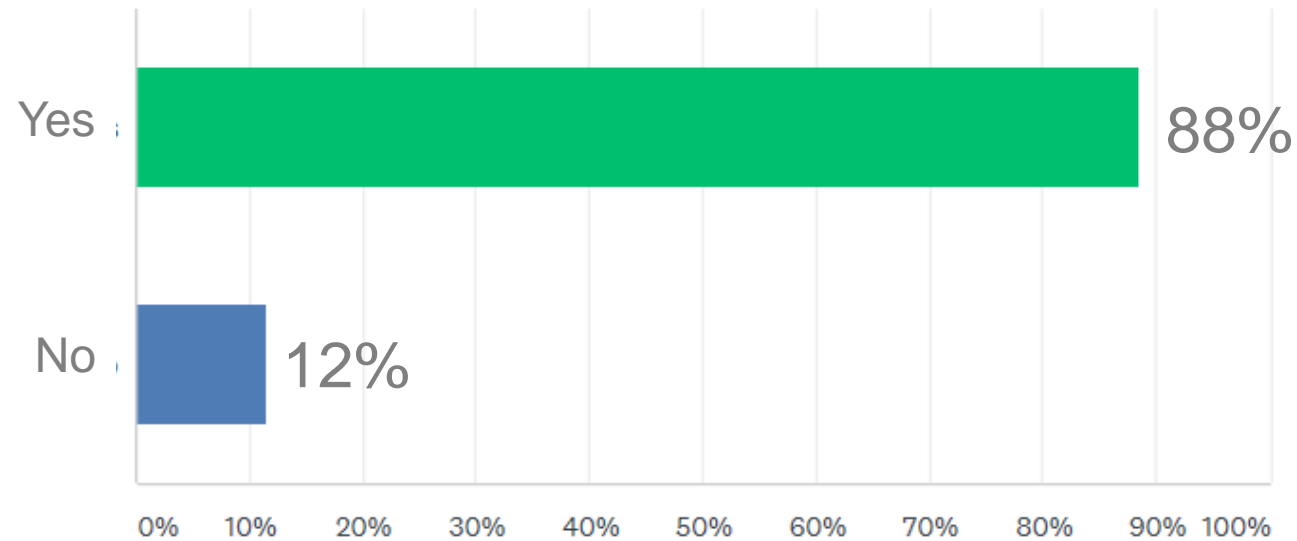
Southgate Survey Participants

- 138 individual responses came from 122 households.
- There were 16 responses where two people from one household answered the survey – we will call those “doubles” – this is 12% of the total responses.
- 11% of those “doubles” came from Churchill and Mariposa...consistent with the 12% overall
- 50% of the “doubles” had differing opinions on at least one question

6
Q1:

Have you kept up with the discussion of the City's plan to make a significant change to the Churchill intersection (in order to separate the train tracks from the road)?

Answered: 138 Skipped: 0

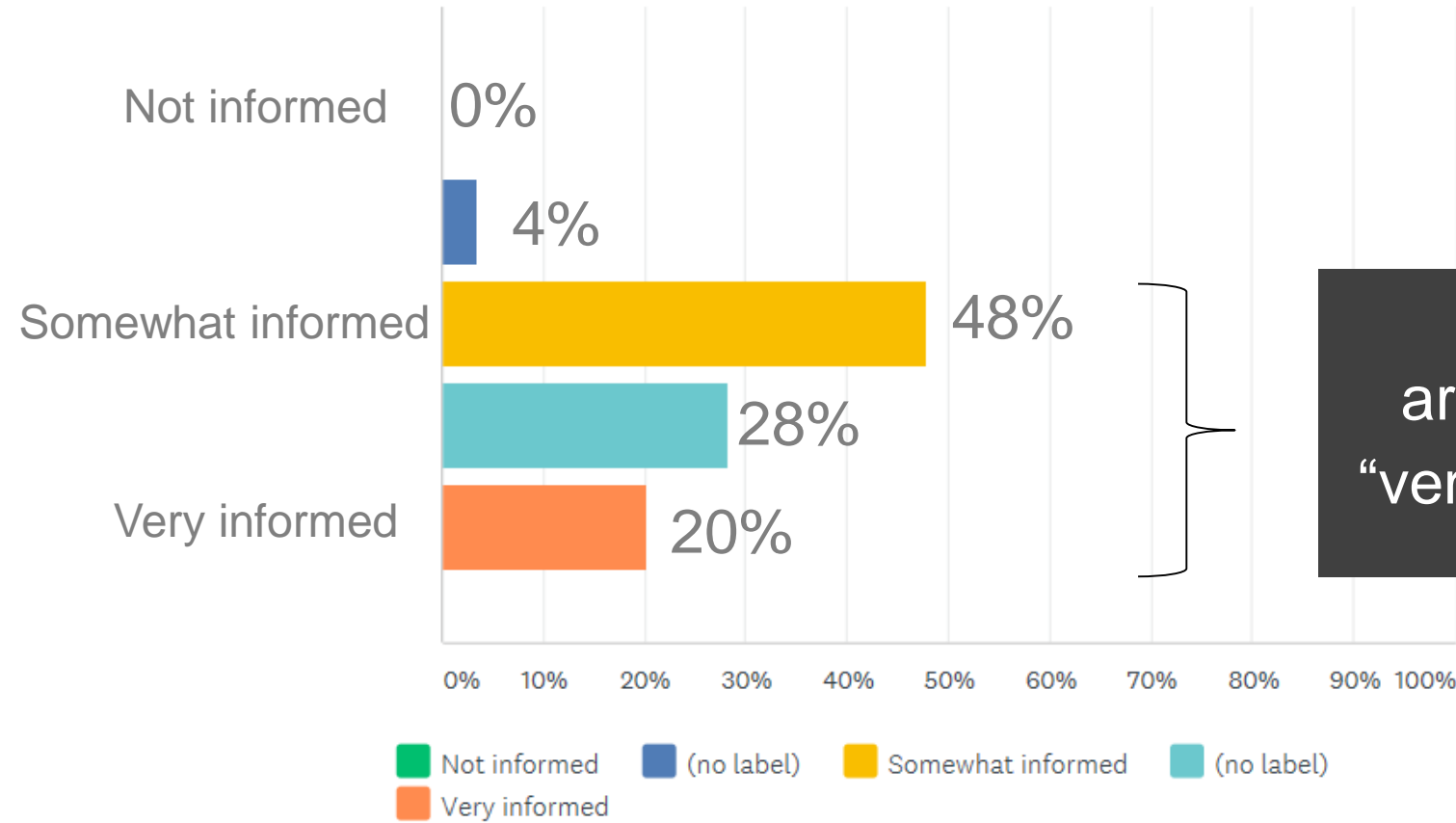


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Yes	88.41% 122
▼ No	11.59% 16
TOTAL	138

7
Q2:

How informed do you feel you are on this issue?

Answered: 138 Skipped: 0



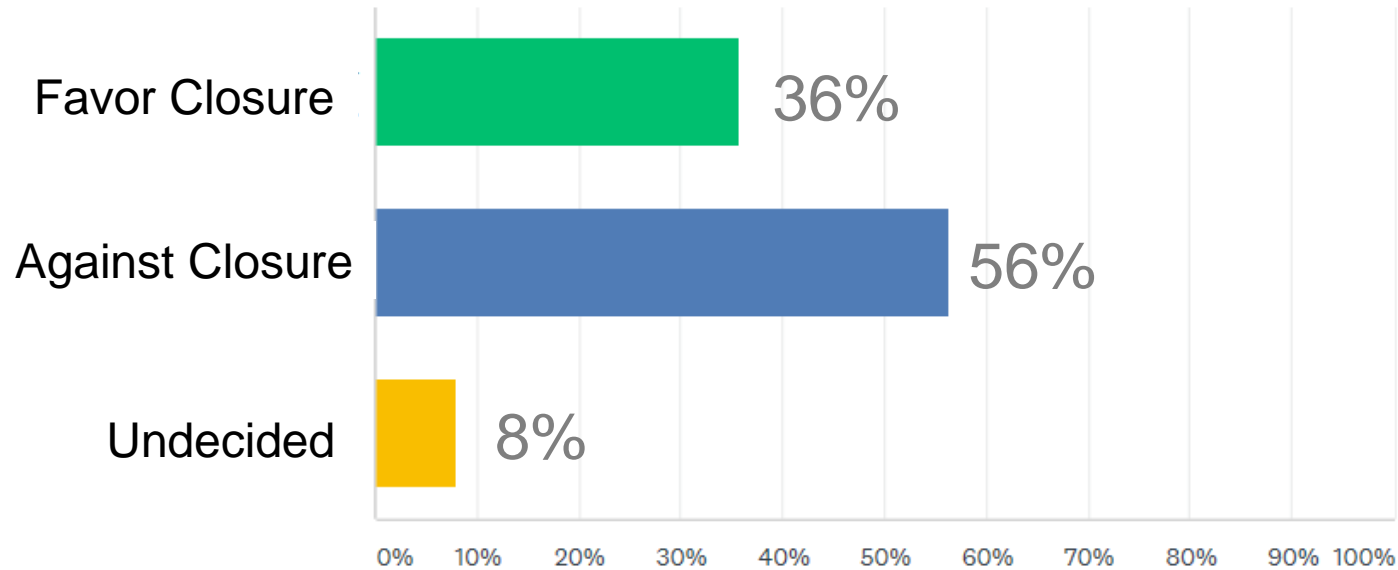
96% feel they are "somewhat informed" to "very informed" on this issue.

	NOT INFORMED	(NO LABEL)	SOMEWHAT INFORMED	(NO LABEL)	VERY INFORMED	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	0.00% 0	3.62% 5	47.83% 66	28.26% 39	20.29% 28	138	3.65

8
Q3:

Based on your current knowledge, what is your opinion about closing Churchill?

Answered: 137 Skipped: 1



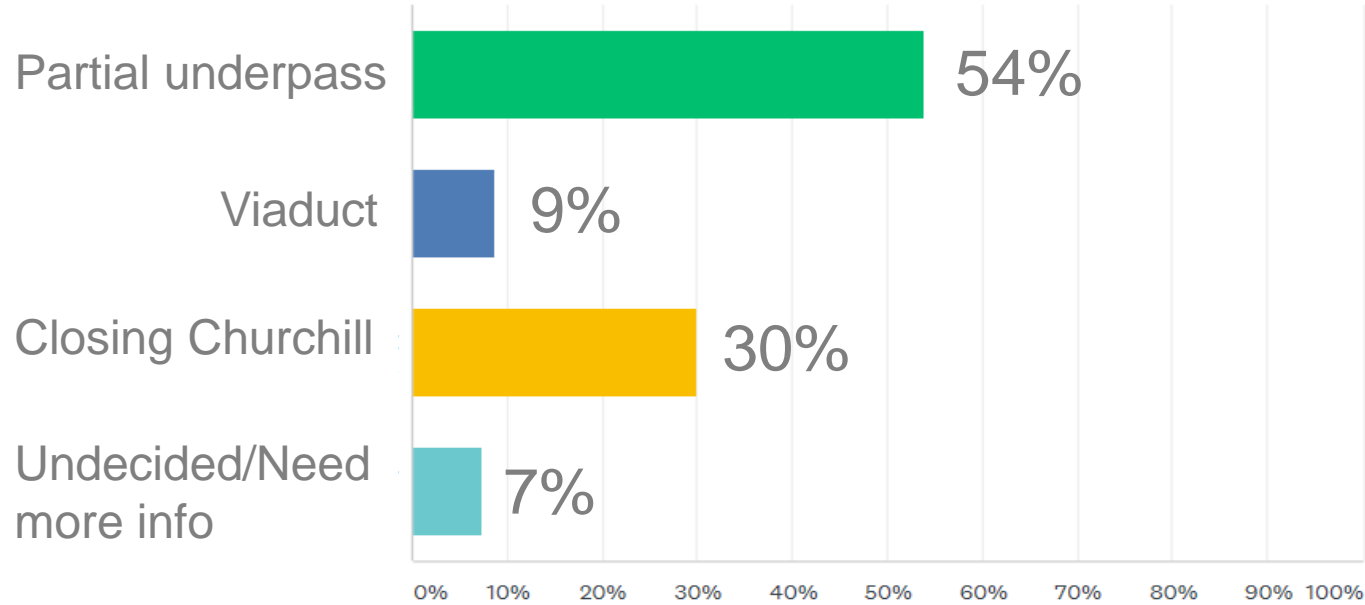
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ I am in favor of closing Churchill	35.77% 49
▼ I am against closing Churchill	56.20% 77
▼ I am undecided	8.03% 11
TOTAL	137

[Comments \(45\)](#)

9
Q4:

Originally, there were two primary options on the table: closing Churchill or a Viaduct (raised platform for the train). Now, there is a third option (a partial underpass) which is also under evaluation. Of the potential options on the table (based on my current knowledge), I am most in favor of

Answered: 137 Skipped: 1



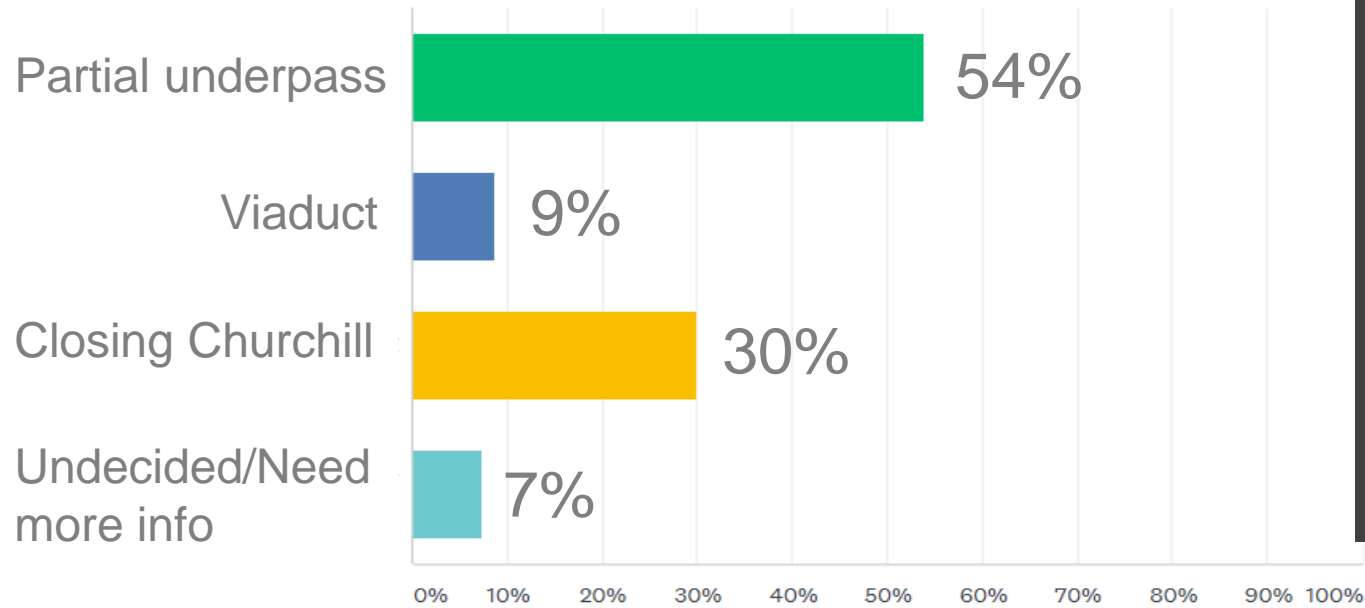
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Partial underpass	54.01% 74
Viaduct (raised train)	8.76% 12
Closing Churchill	29.93% 41
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TOTAL	137

[Comments \(39\)](#)

10
Q4:

Originally, there were two primary options on the table: closing Churchill or a Viaduct (raised platform for the train). Now, there is a third option (a partial underpass) which is also under evaluation. Of the potential options on the table (based on my current knowledge), I am most in favor of

Answered: 137 Skipped: 1

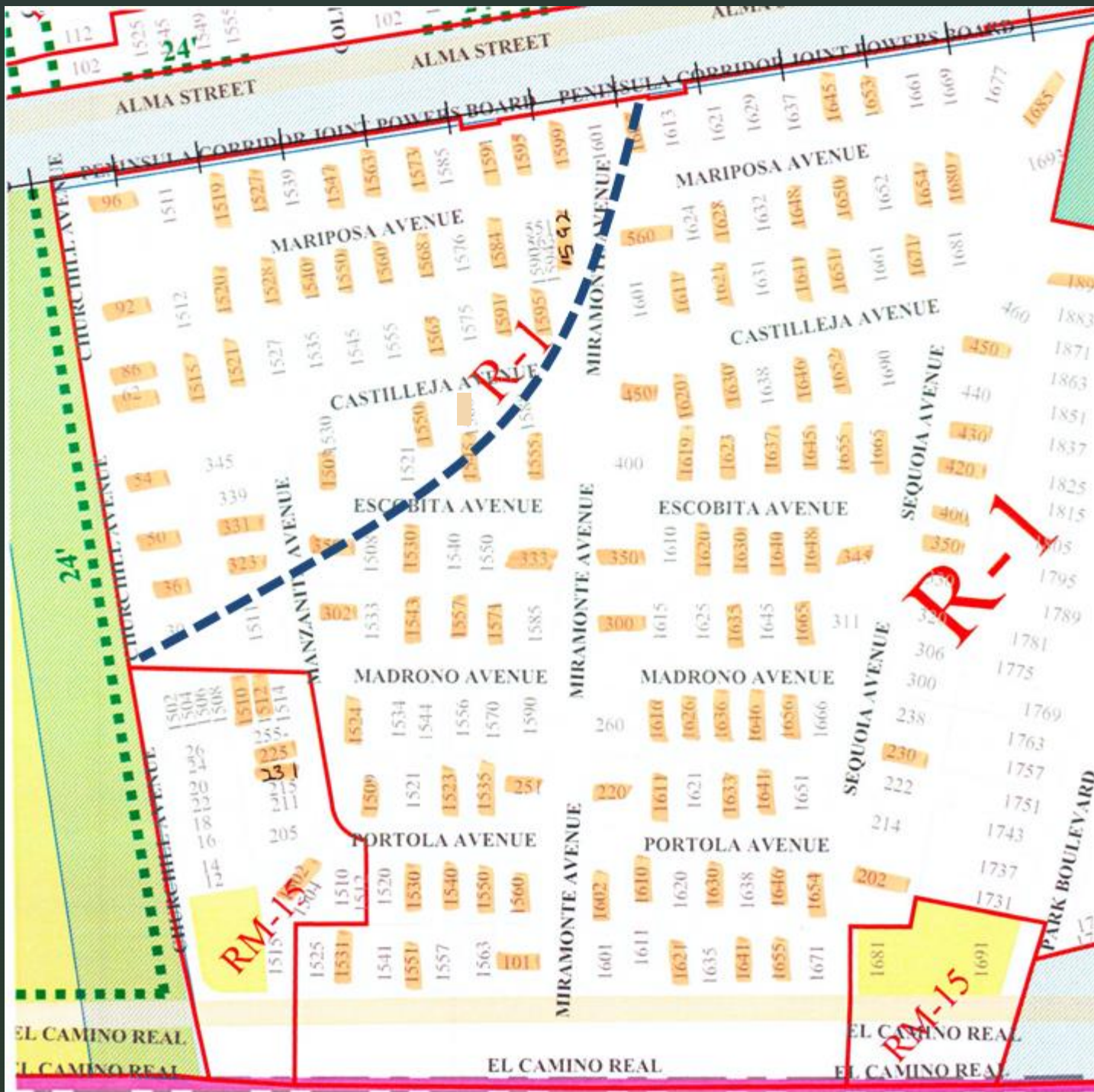


More than half of respondents favor the partial underpass

6% of respondents moved from Closing Churchill to Partial Underpass

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Partial underpass	54.01% 74
Viaduct (raised train)	8.76% 12
Closing Churchill	29.93% 41
Undecided / Need more information	7.30% 10
TOTAL	137

[Comments \(39\)](#)

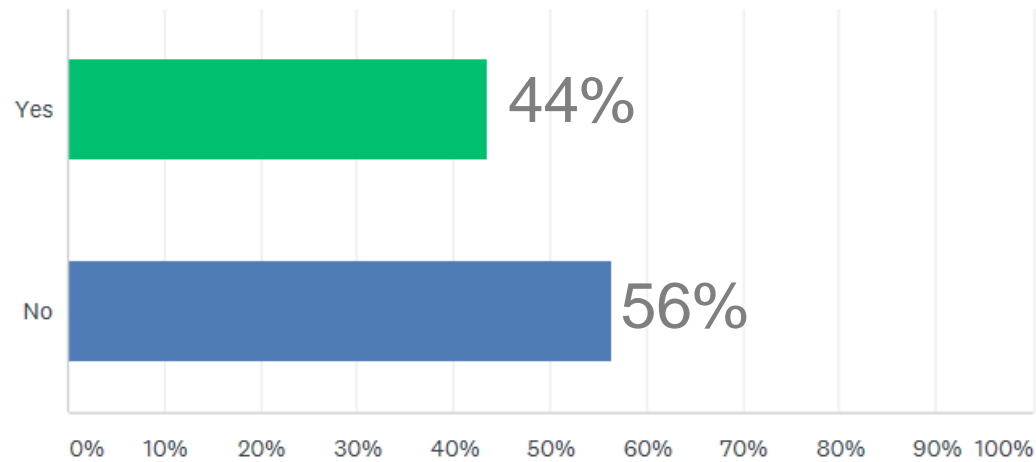


- 83% of the votes that were most in favor of Closing Churchill come from the 3 blocks within this blue arc (Churchill Ave, 1500 blocks of Mariposa and Castilleja)
- Votes most in favor of the Partial Underpass were distributed throughout the neighborhood

12
Q5:

Many years ago, Castilleja was closed at Park Blvd (by Peers Park) in order to reduce through traffic in the neighborhood. Some have suggested that if Churchill were closed, one way to mitigate access impacts for Southgate residents would be to re-open Castilleja at Peers Park. IF the city decided to close Churchill, would you be in favor of opening Castilleja at Park Boulevard (by Peers Park) to allow through traffic?

Answered: 133 Skipped: 5

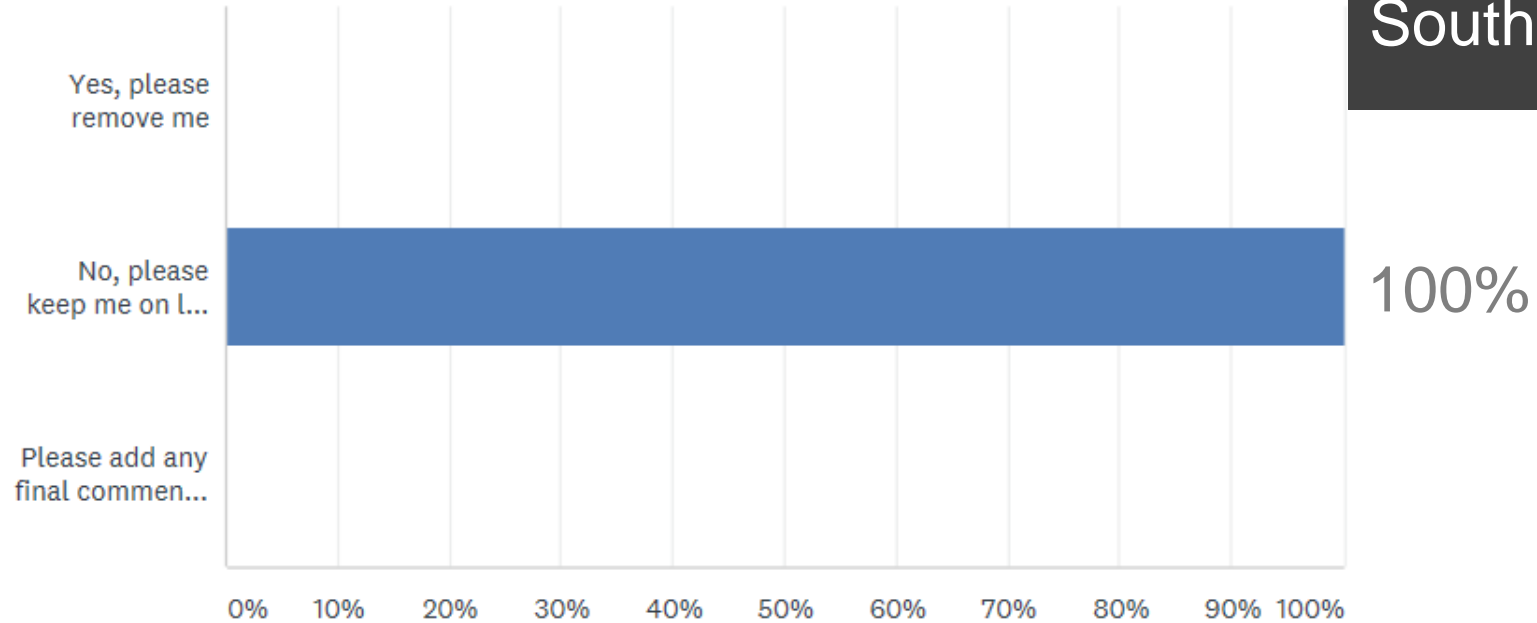


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	43.61% 58
No	56.39% 75
TOTAL	133

[Comments \(50\)](#)

I would like to be removed from this email list

Answered: 137 Skipped: 1



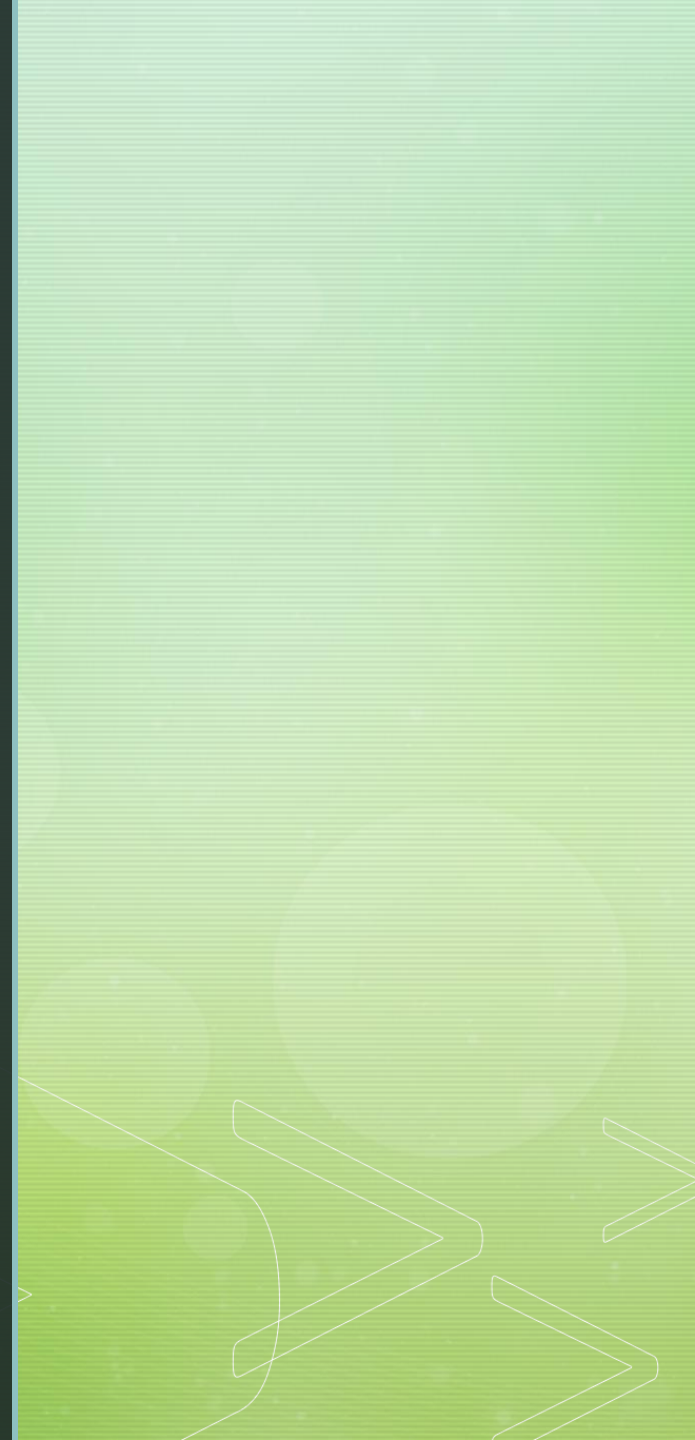
This issue is of great importance to Southgate residents

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes, please remove me	0.00% 0
No, please keep me on list and keep me posted	100.00% 137
Please add any final comments here	Responses 0.00% 0
TOTAL	137

Summary

- **Participation in the survey was strong** with **59% of households and distributed evenly** throughout the neighborhood.
- **56% of the neighborhood is against Closing Churchill** with only 36% supporting.
- Households most in favor of Closing Churchill are clustered in one corner of the neighborhood (**83% come from 3 blocks**) while the rest of the neighborhood is largely against.
- The **viaduct is especially threatening to those on Mariposa** and received the least support. Only 9% favored that option.
- The **partial underpass is the preferred option - with 54% of the votes.**
- This is a VERY important topic to the residents of Southgate – please keep ALL residents informed.

APPENDIX of comments from the survey



- Total Comments: 177
- All comments are shared in the attachment
- Representative comments follow

Why are many residents concerned about closure?

- Closing Churchill would effectively isolate Southgate from the rest of Palo Alto. I believe that separation would harm our quality of life as well as the value of our properties.
- Closing Churchill would increase already crowded roads as alternates. Additionally, it would have a negative effect on PAUSD operations as noted in a letter from the Superintendent.
- Closing Churchill just totally impacts Embarcadero, already UNBEARABLY impacted, and El Camino, also VERY slow during normal rush hour.
- Dead-ending our residential enclave and blocking logical ingress & egress to schools & businesses is nuts!

➤ Concerns about closure (continued)

- Closing Churchill will have negative effects on the composition of our neighborhood, as younger families with jobs and kids move out so as to have better access to the east side of the tracks. Beyond our own neighborhood interests, I believe diverting thousands of cars per day to El Camino, Oregon, and Embarcadero will create even worse traffic than we have now (under non-COVID conditions).
- Closing the intersection would make traffic much worse, and it would slow down emergency response time for our neighborhood. It would also make it a much slower commute for those of us who live in Southgate—even just to go pick up groceries.
- I live in Southgate, and really don't see how traffic can work out with the crossing just being closed, and all traffic being diverted to Embarcadero and Oregon Xpress. More considerations should be directed to local residents and Palo Alto High. These are the people who are being affected the most. Not the people who live along Churchill and want something different. We have no options when we need to get out of our subdivision.

➤ Concerns about closure (continued)

- While I appreciate the purpose of closing Churchill (and even acknowledge the benefits it might bring), I am concerned that an unintended consequence will be to physically and mentally untether Southgate from its current association with Old PA. This would have implications for house values, commuting times, ease of reaching friends and family on the other side of the tracks, access to Walter Hays, among many other issues. Without the Churchill thoroughfare, I suspect that Southgate stands a very good chance of being marginalized into one of a handful of unconnected micro-neighborhoods stuck between Alma and El Camino; difficult to access, an oddity on the local map, not closely associated with the core of Palo Alto and not part of Stanford. ...We are at risk of cutting off the blood flow to this unique neighborhood.

Why do some residents prefer closure?

- Don't spend hundreds of millions to build something when closing Churchill is safer and the traffic reports say it would not cause any issues.
- I am strongly against the viaduct as it would be built behind my back fence. Both other options are acceptable, with closure preferred.
- The XCAP traffic analysis shows this to be the best option for all of Palo Alto. The cost is 1/3 to 1/4th the other option costs. There are NO critical effects to any neighbors. Viaduct is critically negative to Mariposa and Castilleja neighbors. Underpass is critically negative to Churchill and neighbors close to Churchill.

Comments in support of closure (continued)

- Of these 2 choices, I am in favor of closing with traffic mitigation measures on other arteries (and possibly opening at Peers Park). Since the partial option came to light, that seems like a good compromise too.
- I would prefer closing Churchill to a viaduct. And have major concerns about significant traffic increases on Churchill if trains are taken out of the equation (partial underpass).
- Of course without having done my homework, I realize the closure of Churchill may mean longer drive times for most outings, especially during peak travel periods - but I can deal with an additional 5 minutes for the many benefits of being in this neighborhood, and I'm most interested in what would serve the safety, equity, and accessibility needs of the city/region. So, I'm not especially concerned about localized inconvenience in my neighborhood if I understand a greater good that's being achieved.
- Let's not spend millions of taxpayer funds for something we don't need. Close Churchill.

▶ A few households are split

- Our household is split. My wife who does most of the driving would prefer Churchill to remain open if this is done via partial underpass. I find both closure and underpass to be suitable solutions. We both are strongly opposed to viaduct as this seems entirely inappropriate bisecting residential neighborhoods and if there were funding to support this level of construction it would be much better spent improving major roadways, e.g. Embarcadero/Oregon rather than facilitating the bypass route through Churchill that functions to offload traffic that is coming from or going to one of these roadways.

In Comments regarding Churchill Closure (Q3)

27% of comments express concern over Viaduct

- I am strongly against the viaduct as it would be built behind my back fence. Both other options are acceptable, with closure preferred.
- I would prefer closing Churchill to a viaduct. And have major concerns about significant traffic increases on Churchill if trains are taken out of the equation (partial underpass).
- This choice is based on the original two choices of closing Churchill or viaduct. My true preference order is 1. partial underpass, 2. close Churchill, 3. viaduct
- We both are strongly opposed to viaduct as this seems entirely inappropriate bisecting residential neighborhoods and if there were funding to support this level of construction it would be much better spent improving major roadways, e.g. Embarcadero/Oregon rather than facilitating the bypass route through Churchill that functions to offload traffic that is coming from or going to one of these roadways.
- I would choose closing over the viaduct if those were the only 2 options on the table.

39 Comments regarding Favored Option (Q4)

In favor of Viaduct (8%)

- In Japan and France, they have viaducts, I don't see why they can't do it in this country.
- I'm beginning to see the viaduct as the most viable option with the least disruption. However, the partial underpass is a very close second.

Against Viaduct (23%)

- Palo Alto does NOT need a viaduct - ever.
- The viaduct is the most expensive and disruptive option.
- I am against the viaduct. I saw a viaduct very similar to the one being proposed in a similar neighborhood in Long Island. It is terrible for all except the trains.

In favor of Partial Underpass (59%)

- In favor of partial underpass!! No viaduct! No Churchill closure!
- Partial underpass preserves the most throughways for traffic, is safer for bikes and pedestrians and is not an ugly industrial looking viaduct.
- This is by far the best suggestion without cutting off access to the southgate neighborhood.

Against Partial Underpass (8%)

- Partial underpass seems very complicated and very costly, and it will change the neighborhood dramatically in a negative way.

Concerns about Opening Castilleja at Peers Park (Q5):

Most comments (30) were written by those with concerns

- This would put children going to and from the park and school in danger.
- Absolutely not! The whole point of Southgate and why we bought our home here is because there is no traffic and the kids can play in the street.
- Castilleja is already a bike boulevard. Adding more vehicle traffic would be disastrous.
- When that was open (in the 70s), the 1600 block of Mariposa had the highest accident rate in Palo Alto. Cars would pick up speed along Park, zoom around where the barrier is now, and lose control rounding the curve onto Mariposa. The magnolia tree which was in the curb strip in front of 1669 was approx. 2 feet in diameter at the top and one foot in diameter at the bottom due to repeated car impacts. My car, parked in front of my house, was totally sideswiped by another out-of-control car. ...
- Street way too busy with bike and pedestrian traffic to consider this. Even if there were restricted parking to minimize choke points the safety factor would be intolerable.

Concerns about Opening Castilleja at Peers Park (Q5)

- The closure at Peers Park was implemented to prevent people beyond Southgate from using Castilleja as a shortcut to the California Ave business district. Especially now that Castilleja has been designated as a bike boulevard, it would be dangerous to have cars driving through.
- Absolutely not. I was here at the time that was open and then closed. I was one of the teenagers who sped through Southgate almost daily to avoid the traffic at the corner of Churchill and El Camino. Madrono was like a narrow expressway with cars traveling fast. Now to add to the danger of more cars in Southgate -- and there will be -- we have a bike boulevard, a dog park and Peers park is busier with kids on trikes and people walking. It is really nice and safer that that part of the street is closed to traffic.
- No way. We would not have bought a house here if we thought that was an option.
- I have lived in Southgate since 1988 -- long enough to have heard why it was closed. It was closed to protect the children. Drivers going home were cutting through the neighborhood and traveling at high speed past the park and through the neighborhood. So, it was closed to protect the children. As a consequence, Peers Park is the safest and perhaps the nicest park in Palo Alto.

Comments supportive of opening at Peers (Q5)

5 comments total

- We think a neighborhood route to Oregon would make sense and unlikely to increase through traffic significantly.
- If it's mostly neighborhood traffic, I would be in favor of opening. There should be a study to determine how much through (non-Southgate) traffic this would encourage.
- I would open it one way, only to exit Southgate, only to turn right onto Park.
- Seems like a good idea - at least as a trial. Our narrow streets with parking on both sides could make Castilleja less safe for cyclists if it starts being used for through car traffic.
- I would be in favor of opening Castilleja in addition to leaving Churchill open.

➤ Given that no option is perfect, some suggest other options

- I believe the Partial Underpass and the Viaduct plans both have merit, but I prefer to keep bicycle and pedestrian traffic above ground and to limit car traffic movement from Churchill East to Churchill West on an as-needed basis rather than preventing small amounts of traffic to move freely across Alma during non-peak hours. To make bicycle and pedestrian movement safer, I think we should use a **dedicated bicycle/pedestrian signal at Alma/Churchill and at Castilleja/Churchill like the one in use at Homer Street, although I would only use it during the peak Paly commute hours.** In lighter traffic, I think the current method works fine. I also think Palo Alto should mark bicycle lanes much more clearly along the length of Churchill and expand the west-bound bike lane on Churchill East to the area for parked cars, limiting parking there to overnight and weekends.
- Is there a possibility to have it partially open (Churchill) to Southgate residence only? Have a gate system of some kind.
- I'd like to explore partial closure options - limiting left turns on to Churchill from Alma and from Churchill to Alma, thereby reducing wait time at that intersection and extending time when traffic can go on to Churchill west across Alma in the morning (should be longer in the morning as well as adding time in the afternoon, to increase safety for PALY students. Other pedestrian crossing options are needed there - at a minimum there needs to be pedestrian access across Alma at Churchill. Lastly, Stanford should work w/ the City to explore commute patterns and better connection between transit systems. A lot of people commute in single vehicles to/from Stanford on Churchill.
- RE: "Peers Park passage": One possible traffic control might be to place a stanchion in the middle of the road that is lowered by a remote control similar to a garage door opener. The remote control could be available only to Southgate residents for a fee to offset costs to the City.
- Is **undergrounding the train** a viable option?

Lastly, some comments raised about long-term impacts of Pandemic

- I think COVID is making everyone rethink how they work. Is it possible that there will be long-term reductions in traffic anyway? Less people commuting, fewer trains needed in general? Has this been discussed as part of future planning?
- The prudent thing to do at this time is nothing. At a time when mass transit ridership is declining in every metropolitan area in the country including Los Angeles, Caltrain's projection of tripling ridership was amazingly optimistic, and reflected pre-COVID19 thinking....Just a few years ago, faced with declining ridership, Caltrain was in severe distress. As this tech expansion has reached maturity Caltrain ridership had actually started to decline in the months prior to COVID19. We may not know what the post pandemic world will look like, but we can rest assured that it will be very different, and sitting on Caltrain may well be the least desirable work option, so Caltrain's future is largely unknown. Therefore, the safest thing at this time is to do nothing until we can better visualize Silicon Valley's future work environment and transportation requirements.