

## **Expanded Community Advisory Panel (XCAP)**

**August 26, 2020, 3:30 PM**

Summary – Special Meeting (virtual, through Zoom)

### **1. Welcome and Roll Call**

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

Absent:

### **2. Staff Updates**

Philip Kamhi, Chief Transportation Official remarked that his background is the virtual Town Hall and that is going well. He encouraged everyone to visit the virtual Town Hall and tell their neighbors. He advised that tomorrow night they will be responding to some of the questions and feedback they received on Churchill alternatives as well as some general comments. That can be found on [connectingpaloalto.com](http://connectingpaloalto.com) or access it directly from the virtual Town Hall. That website address is [vrpaloalto.com](http://vrpaloalto.com). There is a lot of information there much of which represents the hard work the XCAP Group has done.

Ripon Bhatia, Senior Civil Engineer mentioned two Q&A sessions on August 27 and September 3.

Mr. Kamhi advised on September 3 they will be going over the Meadow and Charleston alternatives. Currently the Town Hall is scheduled to be up through September 7. There are two different areas to provide feedback. After looking at an alternative and exiting, feedback can be provided then. Also, at the bottom of the page there is a Virtual Town Hall feedback form. He noted the Churchill alternatives were presented to the City School Liaison Committee last week and they had some questions about the alternative, but didn't offer feedback on any of the specific alternatives. They encouraged their students and parents to go to the virtual Town Hall and provide feedback.

Chair Naik asked if the City School Liaison Committee said if they were going to refer it to the City School Traffic Committee?

Mr. Kamhi responded staff will plan on taking it to the City School Traffic Committee. He did not believe the School Board had representation on that.

Chair Naik remarked that the accolades for the virtual Town Hall go to the City staff and AECOM.

Mr. Kamhi affirmed it was a collaborative effort on the part of staff, AECOM and XCAP to develop the materials.

Chair Naik remarked there was some feedback about not being able to put virtual sticky notes or comment on certain sections. She asked is something they are working on to improve the Town Hall experience?

Mr. Kamhi advised there is a tutorial that can be found when entering the room to the left and also on the [connectingpaloalto.com](http://connectingpaloalto.com) website. That tutorial walks visitors through how to interact with the room and how to provide feedback.

XCAP Member Cho commented when she went to the first page of the virtual Town Hall, she was excited but only the new options were listed. She inquired if it should be noted these are only the new options. She did not see the option of closing Churchill in the virtual Town Hall.

Mr. Kamhi reported that all of the alternatives that are currently under consideration are included in the virtual Town Hall.

XCAP Member Cho explained on the first page there are six or nine options but the Churchill closure is not one of those options to see the animations.

Mr. Bhatia responded the animations are only related to the grade separations and the Churchill closure does not create a grade separation. All the options are opened for Churchill when clicking on the Churchill Avenue location on the tabletop.

Chair Naik noted that was a good point. Unless it is known that there isn't a construction phase video for a closure, it is possible to miss the section showing the bike/ped crossing for the closure.

Mr. Kamhi again reiterated the necessity of watching the tutorial.

XCAP Member Brail commented that he loved the 3D animation but would like to be able to make it bigger.

XCAP Member Burton applauded Mr. Kamhi's tutorial delivery but it was very hard to follow the presentation by the AECOM member and suggested that part of the tutorial be redone under better sound conditions.

Chair Naik requested that XCAP be notified of any major tweaks that might happen as a result of the feedback received.

Mr. Kamhi affirmed that could be included in the staff updates.

### **3. Oral Communications**

Kathy Jordan thanked XCAP for all their hard work. She commented on the deliberations XCAP will be undergoing and that the XCAP was asked to make recommendations under certain assumptions and conditions which no longer exist: Caltrain's business plan is paused, Caltrain plans to do its own grade separation study with its own recommendations, Caltrain ridership has declined drastically and may never recover, and the health and safety concerns about the use of public

transportation. Any recommendations the XCAP makes will need an asterisk next to them.

Art Small is a Southgate resident who strongly supports closing Churchill at Alma. He felt the Churchill closure is the best solution because it will restore Churchill as a neighborhood street safe for bikes and pedestrians to cross. The underpass is undesirable because it is dangerous and will create a high-speed arterial on Churchill, putting lives at risk. It will not solve the traffic problems it is aimed at. It is ruinously expensive and after that high expenditure, the City will still have to improve the Embarcadero and Oregon intersections. The advantage for local residents is minor. He felt the viaduct was awful.

Chair Naik reminded speakers this section is only for items not on the agenda.

Ms. Lapier is a resident of Old Palo Alto and she remarked that many of her neighbors know anything about the options. He wondered if the City has used mailers or inserts in the utility bills or some other way to get the word out. (no audio) People who are being told at the last minute to get involved will be very confused. She encouraged the City to make a greater effort to reach out to people in other neighborhoods to make sure they realize big decisions will be made in their neighborhood with taxpayer funds. She also agreed with Ms. Jordan that scenarios have completely changed and the XCAP should take a pause or a step back.

Jason Stinson remarked he has sent a number of emails to the XCAP at the City of Palo Alto email address. In conversation yesterday an XCAP member he mentioned the emails were going into his spam folder and that might be something that needs to be looked into.

Barbara Hazlett pointed out on the virtual Town hall, with respect to Churchill, the “do nothing” option is not shown, and it is still on the table. She felt clearly the grade separation exercise along this corridor needs to be paused. It is a great waste of time, money and destruction of a town to address an issue whose underlying assumptions are obviously no longer valid. XCAP, as the advisory committee to Council is obligated to report the truth, which is there is no need for XCAP’s further deliberations.

Susan Newman wondered, regarding the Town Hall, if there was any possibility of allowing residents to see the feedback of other residents? She knew about the question and answer session on Thursday but would like to see and hear the actual comments of residents. She asked why the construction phasing process for closure has not been included.

David Epstein noticed on the website, Professorville was not included in the choices of where to comment from.

Mr. Kamhi clarified that staff will respond to feedback, questions and comments received through the process of the feedback form on Thursday. They are planning to post all the information gathered on the website. There are plans to do a blog to share the end results or information collected from the Town halls. This will also be shared with City Council.

#### **4. Deliberations on Churchill**

Chair Naik explained public comment will be taken before deliberations begin. After that, deliberations will begin. If that continues to the next meeting, people who have commented today will not have a chance to comment again because this will be a continued meeting.

##### Public Comment

Susan Newman indicated she has been following this process since the first days of the original CAP and appreciates all the work and time involved. She agreed with the point of the widespread lack of awareness in affected neighborhoods and hoped a strong recommendation is included to the City for a radical improvement in outreach before the City Council makes a decision. The XCAP is trying to decide the weighting of a lengthy list of criteria in making this decision. She urged prioritizing the initial shorter list of top priorities of Council-approved criteria and to recommend to Council addressing the many other also important criteria with additional transportation and bicycle safety efforts, beautification efforts, etc. At the top of the initial list is improved connectivity for all modes of traffic. In spite of Mr. Black's predictions of improved level of service at a few intersections, she didn't think anyone who lives in Palo Alto and has looked at this, seriously considers closing Churching as advancing that goal. Most of the residents who live west of the tracks, with the exception of Southgate, have not been heard from. She reminded XCAP that in the case of Southgate, a majority of those residents opposed closing Churchill. The east/west movement around town doesn't happen only at peak traffic hours and closure cuts that off.

Ms. Lapiere reminded the committee that there are only four crossings in Palo Alto and closing any one of those is a drastic decision. There is no discussion about closing at Old Palo Alto, East Meadow or Charleston. She wondered why closing Churchill is given so much weight because it doesn't make sense to close any of the crossing in town. Leaving it alone should be listed as an option on the surveys and the response forms because not having that option makes it look like the committee has already decided that Churchill will be closed with no consideration for keeping it open. She favored leaving Churchill alone, mitigating traffic with better signals on Embarcadero and Page Mill and that should be a higher priority than pushing the closure of Churchill. Palo Alto High School is right there with 2,000 students plus staff and this crossing has a huge impact on them. What is the logic of closing a street that helps take people to and from a school with about 2,500 people a day? The "do nothing" option should be offered.

Barbara Hazlett strongly opposed the closing of Churchill. The pandemic has created a major phase change. Companies are embracing work at home for much of the workforce. The use of mass transit has plummeted and there is a question of whether Caltrain is sustainable. The grade separation exercise along this corridor, including the closure of Churchill needs to be paused. She remarked there is an omission in the virtual Town Hall that does not show the "do nothing" option is still viable that the Council left on the table. Not showing this option demonstrates a bias she finds disturbing.

Yoichiro Taku lives on Kellogg. He advised he submitted a fairly comprehensive list of comments in July on behalf of the residents of his neighborhood with regard to their opposition to the tunnel. He did not recall an XCAP discussion about the criteria used to determine their recommendations. He picked criteria that supported his position that the partial underpass plus the Kellogg works. Closure is the cheapest option. He understood the City Council gave the XCAP certain criteria, but some criteria are more important than others. Under property impact, eminent domain needs to be utilized to capture slivers of property and there will be challenges to that. On a personal level, he did not want to lose the parking in front of his house and everyone else on his block. The third criteria he would look at is feasibility. Even of Kellogg tunnel, partial underpass is recommended to City Council, he did not think it was feasible based on the conversations and feedback from Caltrain regarding the right-of-way. The fourth thing is the impact on the tunnel on Castilleja traffic. The Architectural Review Board looked at the latest plans for Castilleja. There is concern about drop-off and pickup points. The tunnel will send a lot of PALY traffic that will conflict with Castilleja traffic. Finally, safety is a criterion and having a lot of high-speed vehicles on Alma closer to the sidewalk is not a good idea and the tunnel is narrow. He felt the partial underpass was an outgrowth of a community idea and the Kellogg tunnel not well thought out.

David Kennedy acknowledge the diligent work of XCAP. He strongly opposed closing Churchill which would be disruptive to the community. The Comprehensive Play says keep all crossings. Considering the unrealistic criteria XCAP is dealing with currently, the partial underpass is a good solution to a situation that has been created. He is disappointed XCAP eliminated the hybrid solution. That had a lot of merit although it would require some property acquisition. He echoed the comments of the previous speaker who laid out many of the reasons to have AECOM and XCAP look at the other alternatives to putting a bike/ped underpass at Kellogg. That would destroy that block of Kellogg.

Yoriko Kishimoto agreed with most of the previous speakers. When diving into the details you have to zoom back and forth between the big picture and the details which are important for each decision. She didn't want XCAP to lose site of the big picture of trying to improve the permeability and the number and quality of east/west travel. Holistically and cumulatively will the conclusion mean going down to two or three crossing for everyone or a more permeable network of walkable, bikeable access? She did not want to see an expressway model where everyone is forced to get into a car and go on an expressway to get to a different neighborhood. She thought it would be good to put a priority or phasing into the recommendation and prioritize South Palo Alto because they don't have any rail crossings and then give more time to look at North Palo Alto as a whole.

Richard Purkey commended everyone on the hard work done to identify the pluses and minuses of all the options, including the "do nothing" option. He encouraged looking at the big picture of improving the east/west transit across the rail corridor, doing it in a financially feasible manner. He believed that closing Churchill is the most effective option to improve movement across the corridor for all three modes of traffic, vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle. He has looked at the studies and analyses carefully prepared, and the one factor that stood out was the three times the cost for the partial underpass or the six times the cost for the viaduct. Neither of those

provide any measure of flow or improvement of traffic across the corridor than does the least expensive option which is the closure with mitigations. The mitigations and intersection improvements identified facilitate the east/west flow of traffic and solve many of the problems that have existed for many years by the lack of true intersections at Oregon Expressway and Alma and Embarcadero and Alma.

David Epstein spoke for the people of Professorville and University South. None of the choices other than the viaduct or doing nothing can address the traffic that will greatly impact the neighborhoods in this area. He appreciates that people in some neighborhoods would like to have that closed. Unfortunately, this is pitting one part of Palo Alto against another. The mitigation that has been proposed has not taken into account there is severe impact currently. It is dangerous for bikers and pedestrians. The traffic backs up from El Camino almost to Middlefield at times. Closing Churchill even partially will make that even more dangerous and more impactful for the neighborhoods. Another thing not taken in account is that Castilleja is expanding and if Churchill is closed that traffic goes into his neighborhood. If the "do nothing" option is not chosen, the viaduct option is the best one because it leaves everything open and it reduces the amount of congestion at Churchill. He noted electric trains are significantly quieter than the current trains.

Mohamed Hadidi thanked XCAP for all their hard work. He strongly supported the closing of Churchill with mitigations as the best option. First, the cost is almost an order of magnitude less than the other two alternatives; second, the safety of Palo Alto High School students and street residents; and third, the preserving the residential character of the neighborhood which would be irretrievably damaged by either the partial underpass or the viaduct. His neighborhood is happy with the status quo and are not encouraging the closure of Churchill to increase their property values. The existential damage to his neighborhood cannot be compared to the slight inconvenience for those in the Southgate area, which can be mitigated by opening up Park Boulevard. The existential injury of putting up a massive concrete structure in the midst of a residential area compare to the possible slight increase in traffic for those living close to Embarcadero. The degrees of harm the three alternatives for Churchill pose to the different constituencies don't compare in kind. Fourth, the Hexagon traffic study is clear that with mitigations, traffic at most intersections impacted by the Churchill closure would be better. Only two of the seven impacted intersections would it be worse, but only slightly so. Palo Alto compared to other cities in the Bay Area has more railroad crossings per capita than any of the other cities.

Eduardo Llach remarked that all the options were laid out quite nicely. He favors closing Churchill because he believes, based on the data and conversations, that it is by far the best alternative. It is about one-third as expensive as the underpass and six times less expensive than the viaduct. From a cost perspective, the closure is significantly better. The matrix very clearly outlines the positives and negatives and the closure and viaduct were about even, but the closure was better from a cost perspective as well as a number of other reasons. There would be some issues with Embarcadero, but mitigation analysis that has been done indicates that if you do the mitigation work, traffic will flow much nicer through Embarcadero and address the concerns about traffic backing up to Middlefield. Castilleja has done an analysis and there will be no increase in traffic with option number four they are proposing. Finally,

as a neighbor, he is interested in how people are affected. The viaduct is existentially critically awful for the people on Mariposa. The underpass has a negative effect on the people in Churchill.

Rob Levitsky lives on Embarcadero. He stated the option of leaving Churchill alone has been neglected. It wasn't bad before with about 7 ½ minutes of gate time down with five trains in each direction per hour at peak. Now the train traffic has decreased significantly, about 90 percent. Possibly in the future, ten to twelve years out it may be worth looking into doing something but currently it is not known if the train traffic will ever come back. It is not fair to dump all the cars that were crossing at Churchill to other crossings and adding signals which stopped traffic and think this mitigation will work. Castilleja's plan will add about 1,000 cars.

Rachel Croft lives on Mariposa in Southgate. She strongly urged the support for closure of Churchill. It is the only option that enables preservation of the community feeling of the neighborhood. There was hope the underpass would be a small project that would keep the traffic limited in that area, but it is a massive project. She implored the XCAP to not consider the viaduct, which is also a massive structure and would ruin her backyard. After COVID she feels the number of trains will greatly increase and if the crossing is left open, the noise from train horns will also increase greatly.

Kyu (phonetic) Lee promoted the Churchill closure with mitigations. That is the cheapest option and analysis showed there would be no or a small impact in traffic with the mitigation at Embarcadero. She highlighted the impacts to the residents of the other two options, people living near the viaduct and the underpass option. It would be dangerous for people walking on Alma because there would be no buffer from the street to the sidewalk. Kellogg residents would have the underground tunnel in the middle of their block which would eliminate parking and restrict turns available from their driveways. With the closure, the Churchill crossing would be open to the pedestrians and bikers and Castilleja students will still use Alma and Embarcadero to access the school.

Jason Stinson supports the closure of Churchill. It will cost the least. The traffic studies have been done which demonstrate the closure can be handled with mitigations. The intentions were good for the survey done in the Southgate neighborhood and there were a lot of good things learned. No matter which option is chosen, there will always be neighborhood concerns. Those who support closing Churchill worry about losing property and decline in property values, worry about large structures in their backyard and worry about a major increase in traffic on Churchill if the thru put is increased. Those on the interior of Southgate and Embarcadero are worried about having easy access to North Palo Alto, isolating their neighborhood from North Palo Alto and dumping traffic onto other routes. Whatever alternative is chosen will affect folks so it is important to do whatever is good for greater Palo Alto. Regarding the survey, last year a similar survey was done and the people opposed to closure was at 60 percent, this year is at 56 percent. The people who supported closure went up from 24 percent to 36 percent. The whole point of this Group and the discussions is to consider how to get rid of the at-grade crossing.

Barbara Hazlett asked if there will be traffic studies done on Embarcadero traffic counts?

#### XCAP Member Deliberations on Churchill

Chair Naik reminded XCAP that when the process began some guiding principles were agreed to. These are: Members agree to act in a reasonable, respectful and courteous manner; they will assist the Chair and Vice Chair in discouraging disruptive behavior and enforcing and following XCAP rules; prepare in advance for and attend all meetings; treat each member with courtesy and respect; agree or disagree with ideas, not with people; identify issues prior to taking positions; listen and consider the opinions of others; be brief and clear in your comments; concentrate on problem solving, not fault finding; try not to repeat what has already been said; keep common ground; strive for an enjoyable and rewarding experience; focus on discussion related to the meeting objectives; focus on providing thoughtful, well-meaning input that results in appropriate solutions representing the communities interests and needs; work to reach consensus on solutions for the issues discussed; be positive, respectful and constructive; work in good faith, represent one or more stakeholder groups affected by the project, not personal interests; maintain flexibility and perspective and be willing to learn and compromise; accept the fact that the final route of the project has been confirmed; identify potential conflicts as soon as possible and let other participants know your concerns; keep constituents informed of the outcome of all meetings in a timely manner; commit to regular attendance; focus comments, inputs and deliberations at XCAP meetings found in the media; commit to reading materials prior to meetings; be willing to bring new members up to speed; be courteous and considerate of the interests and ideas of XCAP members, City staff and consultants; be willing to contribute any relevant technical background. Chair Naik acknowledged that XCAP members have all been dedicating a lot of their time and thanked them for that.

XCAP Member Brail started with the viaduct alternative. A pro of the viaduct is that it preserves the most amount of connectivity for the most forms of transportation. Cars, pedestrians and bikes can pass under it, pedestrians and bikes could pass under it in more places than just Churchill. Theoretically there could be more pedestrian and bicycle connectivity across the corridor with the viaduct than with any other option including doing nothing. The second pro to the viaduct is it is an actual grade separation and there are probably more cons to the other alternatives. The first con of the viaduct is that it is the most expensive. The second con is that it is the most visually intrusive for those living near it.

XCAP Member Burton commented on the viaduct and one additional pro is the potential opportunity for reuse of the land where the tracks are currently. A con is the perceived community issue around noise propagation. He has much experience with elevated rail and this would certainly be quieter than the Chicago Loop for example It is still visually intrusive and this would be going through residential districts. Another con is this Churchill Avenue crossing will probably be a contentious issue and the most painful one with no easy, obvious answer. This would be his third choice if ranked.

XCAP Member Cho thought a pro of the viaduct alternative is connecting east and west Palo Alto. A con is that there is no room in the corridor to put a viaduct. It will be



dangerous because it is an elevated structure. The freight train will be using it. It is also very expensive and not worth the cost. She lives on Mariposa and there are some personal issues for her also. Studies show mitigation will provide a good solution.

XCAP Member Klein offered comments on statements by members of the public. One speaker said there were only four crossings in Palo Alto, but there are actually seven. There were more speakers at this meeting who favored the "do nothing" alternative. There was a lot of time spent by XCAP hearing about what would happen if nothing was done. The result would be intolerable traffic backups on Alma at Churchill. Responding to the comments about XCAP just pausing or stopping because Caltrain can't do anything: One, this is an activity that has a very long-time frame. Nothing is being proposed that will be done in the near future. The timeframe is over a ten-year period. The COVID precautions will not last forever and people will probably go back to living the way they were. It would be prudent to move forward with all the work that has been done and assume this will be necessary over the next ten years. He then commented on the viaduct alternative. He felt the main virtue of the viaduct was greater connectivity and increase the vehicular traffic flow in the City. Although everyone seems to recognize there are three modes of transportation talked about, vehicular, bikes and pedestrian, sometimes bikes and pedestrians get lost. The downside of the viaduct is certainly the cost. Consultants sometimes disregard some of the costs, saying there will be money available through the various alternatives from the State, Federal funding, but there is no assurance of those things. This viaduct would take up a very large portion of whatever the budget might be. Another downside is the construction time involved which the community would have to tolerate.

XCAP Member Reckdahl remarked that people are worried about is east/west connectivity, and especially for bikes and pedestrians, the backtracking has much more of an impact. With the viaduct the bikes and peds must still wait for the light at Alma. The pros are that if there was a tunnel going to Kellogg it really impacts the neighbors and in some ways the viaduct relieves the pressure on neighbors. The biggest con is the negative visual impact. The pro on the property impacts is that it could probably be done without any acquisition of properties.

XCAP Member Shen had one pro which is the connectivity that everyone shared. A big con is the cost. Other cons are visual and sound impacts. He is not convinced the modeling is completely accurate. On a separate item, he questioned using a similar process over the three intersections at a higher level. Will there be a greater focus on one option per intersection, or could there be more? There had been talk of possibly having conditional options.

Chair Naik clarified this was a warmup to get used to everyone talking. Her plan had been to continue to go through the other alternatives for Churchill, pros and cons, then see where things stand. She would rather everyone talk about all the alternatives first.

XCAP Member Templeton expressed that there had been much discussion on facilitating the traffic across Alma at Churchill, and with an elevated track, there is potential for other crossings to occur under the track and that might be a pro. Her biggest problem with the viaduct is how much this will affect the people living near

there versus those just using the intersection. She felt not enough is actually known about how much noise will affect the neighborhood. Regarding the cost, this will be a multi-year project but the City is potentially in a multi-year financial crisis, so financing will be very difficult.

XCAP Member Carrasco remarked that it is difficult to talk about just the viaduct without considering the other options which are not good for pedestrians and bikes. The viaduct would allow twelve movements which does not have cars going through the neighborhoods, which is a plus. Bikes and pedestrians are on grade which is a plus. The construction of the viaduct would not require shoofly tracks, also a plus. Downsides are the cost and the visual impacts which are intense and severe for backyards of the 25 residents on Mariposa, so it is their sacrifice for the benefit of the larger population. The other alternatives seem to export the problems to other locations.

Chair Naik indicated she was not going to cover any new ground. She sees the pros for the viaduct as all modes, potentially the use of space, reducing the amount of delays. For her the cost is a big obstacle followed by visual and noise issues. Moving forward, she asked for pros and cons of the remaining two alternatives.

XCAP Member Templeton commented on the closure of Churchill. The pros are that it is quick and easy. It doesn't help with cross corridor movement and is problematic for school children on the other side of Alma who may use that corridor and will have to go farther out of their way to get to school.

XCAP Member Shen agreed the pros for closure of Churchill are quick and easy and it is the cheapest of all alternatives. Mitigations have been studied, and improving Embarcadero and Oregon Expressway will be beneficial to the whole community. There are provisions for the bike and pedestrian connectivity there and it preserves the neighborhoods. Cons would be the light at El Camino and Oregon and the light at Embarcadero and El Camino because they are not managed by Palo Alto. Closing Churchill would mean losing one access point.

XCAP Reckdahl remarked the pros are no property acquisition and it would make Churchill much more of a neighborhood street. The cons are restricting connectivity and the Embarcadero traffic. Mitigations will help but actual impacts are unknown.

XCAP Member Klein felt the pros were lowest cost and the project is reversible. This could be opened up if things don't work out. The cons are loss of connectivity and the potential traffic problems on Embarcadero.

XCAP Member Cho shared her pros were that it was cheaper, safety for pedestrians and bikes and it could be reversed if necessary. The cons would be driving a longer distance to get specific places and commuters would have to find different routes.

XCAP Member Carrasco wanted clarification about reopening the closure. His understanding was that it could not ever be reopened. A con is that the closure exports the problem to other neighborhoods, especially Professorville. A second con is that it diverts pedestrians and bikes to further away from where they want to go. His

pros are that the two blocks next to Churchill benefit tremendously with less traffic and it is less expensive.

XCAP Member Burton comments the pros are clearly that it is low cost and that it has a traffic calming affect along Churchill. The cons are that it exports the impacts to a different neighborhood. His other objection is that the modeling was done based on 2030 traffic volumes, nothing beyond that. This project will have impact to 2040 and beyond. Because of the pandemic it was pointed out that Caltrain is on pause, but economic history shows this economy will be restored more or less and many employees will go back to offices. His concern was that the traffic study ignored traffic affects beyond 2030, so he is very concerned about decreasing east-west connectivity.

XCAP Member Brail responded to the comment about packing it up and going home. He wondered if at one of the meetings there should be a vote to decide that, so that issue can be put to rest. He did not believe everyone would leave Silicon Valley and work remotely forever because of the Coronavirus. He felt things would go back to some sort of normal at some point, and making a decision about not separating the trains from the tracks because of the way things are during an extremely unusual time would be a mistake. He pointed out there are pros to every single grade crossing other than do nothing. Every grade crossing closure option considered would eliminate the sound of the train horns. Regarding the pros of the closure, which is closing Churchill to cars is that it gives a safe experience for bikes and pedestrians which is very important given where it is. The second pro is that it is the cheapest option. There are complicated problems to solve at the other two crossings where the safety problem is much worse and there is no cheap option to fix those. His cons are traffic and connectivity. Improving the traffic patterns elsewhere will have a beneficial effect but the exact affects are not known. Regarding connectivity, the PAUSD trucks and buses frequently use the Churchill crossing which means they will have to go farther around.

Chair Naik felt pros of the closure were that it was the cheapest and it provides the safest connection for bikes. The cons are that it moves the problem elsewhere and the connectivity for the Southgate residents. She was not sure about the reversibility of the closure because to reverse it would probably mean renegotiations with Caltrain. She now asked for comments about the partial underpass.

XCAP Member Klein voiced his pros are that it keeps the east/west connectivity to some degree and second, it would potentially not impose more traffic on other neighborhoods. The cons are that it seems like it is made up of a lot of different parts that don't go together very well, and the cost is also a negative.

XCAP Member Brail's pros were the connectivity for Southgate and not moving more traffic onto Embarcadero and Page Mill. The cons are the cost, much more expensive than the closure, and there are also property impacts. The biggest uncertainties are shoofly tracks and right-of-way and this hangs in the balance of unknown information.

XCAP Member Carrasco started with his cons, which were that it reduced the number of movements of cars which transfers some of the problems to other intersections and the bikes and pedestrians are not a priority with this alternative and it has a

noncompatible relationship with the adjacent neighborhoods. His second con is that it would be constructed during gridlock which is a very difficult task and takes much longer than the other alternatives. He had difficulty with finding pros, but thought the railings looked good.

XCAP Member Shen noted his pros were connectivity is preserved for most of it and there seemed to be some community support for that. A big con was the cost. He felt the bike/ped solution was not right. It is too narrow and it goes down the middle of the street. It will be a visual challenge and traffic there has not been studied.

XCAP Member Templeton addressed the partial underpass as a creative approach on how to minimize and equally spread the pros and cons amongst different people in the community. She is concerned about the bike underpass. Her pros are that it flattens the changes of this intersection amongst different people and it doesn't add any visual changes to residents adjacent to the tracks. The cons are that it would be a major change in the flow of traffic. It is unknown how it will impact Churchill. She is concerned about property acquisitions with this alternative.

XCAP Member Burton his pros were that this alternative did enjoy some measure of community support and based on the traffic analysis this alternative did keep the vast majority of the current traffic from being diverted. The negatives are the property impacts, a lot of neighborhood apprehension and issues with Caltrain about their right-of-way.

XCAP Member Brail felt the pros for this alternative were that it preserved some traffic movement and connectivity and it is cheaper than the viaduct. The biggest cons were the safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. People will not be able to walk from one side to the other for many blocks. Also, a con is that it is a lot of concrete and is not much less ugly than the viaduct.

XCAP Member Cho thought a pro was this alternative made some people happy because of the connectivity. There are many cons. There is no room to build this unless right-of-way from Caltrain can be obtained. Safety is also an issue with this alternative. Cost and length of construction are also issues.

Chair Naik's pros were that it was a valiant attempt to try to mitigate the unfavorable aspects of the viaduct and the closure. The cost is less than a viaduct but more than a closure. The cons were the bike/ped crossing. Time and money ran out to delve deeper into the discussion about specifics of this alternative. The Caltrain uncertainty is a concern, but the reality is unless Palo Alto and this Committee and the Council get behind the possibility of this alternative, Caltrain will just simply say no.

Chair Naik asked members for suggestions for the next meeting. She took notes and will try to out a way to report those back or put them into XCAP Templeton's matrix to use as a tool.

## **5. XCAP Member Updates and Working Group Updates.**

Chair Naik advised it was considered to have several rounds of edits and then push things together. The point of having the edits turned in and become public is each

time that is done, it gives a new round of being able to have new people look at each section.

XCAP Member Burton asked where to look for Megan Kanne's work? He is also looking for feedback from the public on his partials done so far.

Chair Naik advised him to look in the previous agendas, under the informational sections, Ms. Kanne worked on Chapter 4.

XCAP Member Carrasco asked if he can make changes, such as typos in the findings report?

XCAP Member Klein replied in Chapter 4, the findings, it is appropriate to make corrections, send the revised draft to Sarah Wilson noting the revisions.

XCAP Member Brail made a draft of the safety chapter which he shared with Chair Naik and XCAP Member Klein and was looking for feedback.

## **6. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 5:55 P.M.