

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 **August 26 and September 2, 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: [Shaila Sadrozinski](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: For Churchill Closure at rail crossing
Date: Wednesday, August 26, 2020 10:02:49 PM

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

Dear members of XCAP,

Please consider the following points when making a decision about the rail crossing at Churchill Ave:

the partial underpass option

does NOT seamlessly connect the eastern and western sides of Alma (coming from the eastern side, cars can only turn right onto Alma; coming from Southgate, cars cannot cross Alma, only turn left or right), so there's no direct connection between Churchill East and West in both directions

it will make access to Alma by cars from El Camino much easier, and will result in increased traffic on Churchill. Most of this traffic is not neighborhood traffic and it will maximize Churchill as a feeder street for access to Alma, causing *daily* negative impacts to Churchill Ave residents

it will make for unsafe conditions for Paly students crossing Churchill to and from the Castilleja bike boulevard (cars don't always stop for the pedestrian crossing light, and bikes rarely push the button)

high cost (\$160-\$200M) for minimal gain

Churchill closure with mitigations @ Embarcadero/Oregon Expwy

Southgate will not be any more isolated from the rest of Palo Alto than College Terrace and Evergreen Park are; also, the closure only affects cars: pedestrians/bikes still have free access, like at California and Homer Aves

coming on Churchill from the eastern side, cars will be able to also turn left onto Alma (with partial underpass only right turn allowed)

one of the options for the bike/pedestrian underpass is more direct and convenient for Paly students etc (similar to California Ave bike tunnel) than the one proposed with the partial underpass

the existing Embarcadero underpass creates unsatisfactory back-ups and

is in any case in need of improvement, which will be done as part of the mitigation for Churchill closure

fire and police depts say closure will not affect response times

no private properties taken

the least expensive option (1/3 the cost of the partial underpass)

causes *minimal inconvenience* (<5 minutes) to Southgate residents, and only when they want to go to the eastern side of Palo Alto by car

viaduct

unsightly and loud

will increase traffic on Churchill (not neighborhood traffic)

unsafe for Paly students

very close to Mariposa Ave fences, and overlooking backyards

most expensive option (\$300 - \$400M)

causes serious negative impacts *every day* to Mariposa and Churchill residents

the survey recently-conducted by a group of Southgate residents not disclosing their anti-closure bias was weighted to support their preference; some households got more than one survey, others were refused additional surveys. The survey (questions and wording) was flawed and the results should be disregarded. It, and the yard signs installed by this group, elicit an emotional response. The decision should instead be based on analysis of studies already conducted and the cost of each option.

Thank you,

Shaila Sadrozinski (62 Churchill Ave)

From: [Ken Joye](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: visibility of feedback on virtual town hall
Date: Wednesday, August 26, 2020 4:06:39 PM

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During the public comments section of today's XCAP meeting, Susan Newman stated that it would be helpful to enable members of the community to see what other residents have said.

I completely endorse that sentiment—at public town halls in the pre-COVID era, I found that my input was shaped by what I heard other participants say (both their questions and comments).

I know that Mr. Kamhi said that a blog posting would be made summarizing all input; it was not clear to me whether that would happen before the virtual town hall meeting closes on 9 September 2020. It would be hugely advantageous if that feedback were visible prior to the 9th.

thank you for your consideration of this viewpoint,
Ken Joye
Ventura neighborhood

From: [Barbara Ann Hazlett](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#); [Nadia Naik](#)
Cc: [Council, City](#); [Shikada, Ed](#); [Kamhi, Philip](#)
Subject: XCAP Deliberations
Date: Wednesday, August 26, 2020 2:28:25 PM

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

Dear XCAP:

I see from the XCAP's upcoming agendas that your work regarding rail crossing options is now entering the deliberations stage. The COVID pandemic has created a paradigm shift with virtual space being swapped for physical space. Companies are embracing 'work at home' and 'work anywhere' for large portions of their workforce. One consequence is the plummeting of the use of mass transit. As Sebastian Petty from Caltrain frankly told you, there is a question of whether Caltrain is even sustainable. See for yourselves, train after train passes through Palo Alto with no riders on board.

With such dislocations, no one can currently predict what the impact will be to mass transit, traffic, or work locations. Clearly the grade separation exercise, along this corridor, needs to be put on **PAUSE**. It is a colossal waste of time, money and destruction of a town to address an issue whose underlying assumptions are so obviously no longer valid. You are the advisory committee to Council and are obligated to report the truth. The truth is evident. There is no need for deliberation. Please do the responsible thing and inform the Council accordingly.

Best Regards,
Barbara Hazlett

From: [Karen McNay](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Fwd: Support Churchill Closure
Date: Thursday, August 27, 2020 11:52:57 AM

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

Resending because of an incorrect address on the original letter. Sorry.

Begin forwarded message:

From: Karen McNay <kgmcnay@gmail.com>
Subject: Support Churchill Closure
Date: August 26, 2020 at 3:28:23 PM PDT
To: xcap@cityofpaloalto.com

Dear Excap Committee and all others,

I strongly support the closure of Churchill at Alma. I have lived in my home on Mariposa Ave. for over 50 years and have been through all the traffic “modifications” and “solutions” and none have worked for very long. For starters we had Mariposa as One Way out and Castijella as one way in, then we went through the parking on one side of the street only along with some other minor tries. None of them worked!!! The only thing that has helped to modify the ‘cut through’ traffic has been the closure of Park Blvd. at Mariposa. Please don’t even consider removing this as it will only reopen the ‘raceway’ from Calif. Ave.

All of these issues are compounded by the narrowness of the streets in Southgate. It is already difficult enough for cars, let alone emergency vehicles, myriad construction trucks and High School traffic to come through with vehicles parked on the street.

I know this doesn’t affect the residences at the west (El Camino) end of Southgate as much but it certainly is a nightmare and hazard for those of us living in the east end (closer to the tracks).

It is for the above reasons and issues that I feel so strongly about the importance of choosing the closure of Churchill Ave at the tracks as the best solution for Caltrains.

Thank you,

Karen McNay
1520 Mariposa Ave.
PA

From: [Sally Keyes](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Fwd: Support for Closure of Churchill
Date: Thursday, August 27, 2020 8:41:38 AM

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

Date: Wed, Aug 26, 2020 at 12:52 PM
Subject: Support for Closure of Churchill
To: <xcap@cityofpaloalto.com>, <city.council@cityofpaloalto.org>

Greetings XCAP and City Council.

We are in support of the Closure of Churchill Avenue.

Our reasons include:

- the closure of Churchill Avenue is significantly less expensive than a partial underpass or a viaduct
- the closure of Churchill Avenue is significantly less disruptive to all Palo Altans during construction than the construction needed of a partial underpass or a viaduct
- the construction of the closure of Churchill Avenue supports much needed traffic improvements to both Embarcadero and Oregon Expwy
- the construction of the closure of Churchill Avenue retains the integrity of Southgate and Old Palo Alto

Thank you,
Richard and Sally Keyes
Southgate residents

From: [Erik Murphy-Chutorian](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [Council, City; Julia Murphy-Chutorian](#)
Subject: Fwd: Virtual Town Hall is now live
Date: Thursday, August 27, 2020 10:29:14 AM

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

Dear XCAP,

I live in the Southgate neighborhood. I greatly respect your persistence to complexity and the challenge that you have undertaken.

Please know that this process has turned neighbor against neighbor. I honestly can't believe half of the emails my neighbors have written. I'm expecting to see pitchforks and torches next. I really like my neighbors, even when I disagree with some of them about the train, and this extended process has been really awful for this neighborhood.

For the love of this neighborhood, **PLEASE DON'T CLOSE CHURCHILL! SERIOUSLY, THIS WOULD CUT US OFF FROM PALO ALTO! I CAN'T STRESS HOW AWFUL THIS WOULD BE -- IT IS OUR PRIMARY INGRESS & EGRESS TO EVERYTHING IN TOWN, THE FREEWAY, AND MOST WORKPLACES.**

Similarly, don't destroy the property value of everyone on the east side of Mariposa with a viaduct. Seriously **DON'T BUILD A VIADUCT**. You surely get lots of emails from East-side Mariposa folks who advocate for Churchill closure just as an attempt to thwart a viaduct, and I understand why. A viaduct would be catastrophic for their home investment.

Honestly, I would advocate that you do nothing and keep the status quo. Caltrain is empty anyway and high schools are closed. If you have to build something the partial underpass is interesting, but seriously the status quo is the only thing that will keep neighbors from starting a full-on feud.

Erik Murphy-Chutorian

From: [Peter Coughlan](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: I support Churchill CLOSURE
Date: Thursday, August 27, 2020 11:48:31 AM

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

I support closure of Churchill Ave @ Alma (with improvements to Embarcadero and possible pedestrian/bicycle underpass) as the best way to deal with grade separation, for the following reasons:

- 1) it's the least expensive of the solutions being considered
- 2) The project can be started immediately to take advantage of COVID-era traffic levels, and can be completed in phases as the city's financial status becomes clearer
- 3) it provides the quickest solution for the excessive train horns at the crossing (including at 2 a.m each night for the freight train), which may soon lead to expensive lawsuits involving the city. See, for instance, <https://www.marinij.com/2019/09/21/san-rafael-residents-sue-smart-over-horn-noise/> and <https://www.mercurynews.com/2019/05/31/san-jose-may-sue-over-late-night-freight-train-noise/>
- 4) With closure, we can more effectively block access to the tracks by Paly High students.

Thanks to the XCAP committee for your persistence and hard work!

Peter & Teresa Coughlan
1527 Mariposa Avenue

petercoughlan@gmail.com
teresa.coughlan@gmail.com

From: [David S. Vick](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: My comment to XCAP
Date: Thursday, August 27, 2020 2:08:30 PM

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I favor any solution that will eliminate train horns at Churchill.

In addition I favor any solution that will lessen auto traffic on Churchill.

I would be glad to explain the reasons for my two above preferences.

David Vick
323 Manzanita Avenue
Southgate resident
cell 650 660-3303

From: [Jeannet Kiessling](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Please close Churchill!
Date: Thursday, August 27, 2020 8:26:47 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 the great work researching the options and laying them out objectively.

I encourage you to recommend the Churchill Closure w/ Mitigations. It is by far the best alternative for all of Palo Alto considering the costs, disruption, improved traffic overall, with improved safety of Palo Alto Students biking to and from school. Your analysis (Matrix and Traffic) support this decision.

I hope these reasons to support the Churchill Closure resonate w/ your views and what's best for Palo Alto as a whole:

1. The attached [Matrix](#) (the last one published) shows **Closure** and Viaduct **even**(blue dots – orange dots, skip black dots) but the **Underpass is significantly worse** (far more negative orange dots).
 - a. Churchill Closure with mitigations is 1/3 less expensive and far less disruptive than the underpass to everyone during and after construction.
 - b. Viaduct is 6X more expensive than Churchill and creates a significant set of problems during the construction phase and critically affects neighbors.
2. The [Final traffic report](#) shows **closure with mitigation benefits a wider range of citizens** and a wider area with both Embarcadero and Oregon's traffic improved in a very cost effective manner (see table below, and on page 47) vs Underpass or Viaduct which increases traffic on Churchill and still leaves Embarcadero and Oregon w/ the same traffic problems as today.
3. The **underpass and viaduct options pose critical problems** to our neighbors in Churchill and Mariposa, their lives and homes are critically affected w/ dangerous traffic or trains overhead. The Closure alternative has the least critical effects to anyone, there are changes in traffic and ways to get around, but nobody's home or life is critically affected, this is an important issue to consider as we look how our neighbors will be affected by the decisions we make.

Thank you!
Jeannet Kiessling

From: [Mohamed T. Hadidi](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Please support Churchill Closure
Date: Thursday, August 27, 2020 8:33:26 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 dedication and for your meticulous and hard work.

I write you to ask you to please select Churchill Closure with Mitigations in your recommendations to Palo Alto City Council.

The reasons are simple:

1. Cost which is almost an order of magnitude less than the other 2 alternatives.
2. Safety of Palo Alto High School students and street residents
3. Preserving the residential character of the neighborhood, which would be irretrievably damaged by either of the Partial Underpass or the Viaduct. Either of these two other alternatives would pose an almost existential injury to those who are in direct view of these “concrete monsters”. This existential damage cannot be compared to the slight inconvenience for those in the Southgate area who would no longer have as quick an access to Alma as they currently have. This latter problem can be mitigated by opening up Park Blvd which is currently blocked off. Nor does the existential injury of putting up a massive concrete structure in the midst of a residential area compare to a possible slight increase in traffic for those living close to Embarcadero. The degrees of harm that the 3 alternatives for Churchill pose to these different constituencies just don’t compare in kind and are not in the same league.
4. The Hexagon Traffic Study is quite clear that with Mitigations traffic at most intersections impacted by Churchill Closure would be better. Only in two of the seven impacted intersections would it be worse, but only slightly so.

Once more, I strongly and fervently ask you to support Churchill Closure as the option that makes most sense and the one that avoids existential injury to the residential character of the neighborhood and at least to some of its residents.

Best regards,
Mohamed

Mohamed Hadidi, Ph.D.

From: [JW Day](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [JW Day](#)
Subject: Re: CLOSE CHURCHILL
Date: Thursday, August 27, 2020 8:29:36 AM

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

Churchill should be closed at the railroad tracks, with a nearby tunnel or bridge to facilitate foot and bicycle traffic between Old Palo Alto and Southgate/Paly.

The forces pushing to keep Churchill open are loud, their neighborhood survey was not scientific and skewed by their agenda, and they have not accounted for the effects of increased Churchill traffic that would occur if an underpass were built. A viaduct would be even more expensive and cause much more disruption in both Old Palo Alto and Southgate. Increasing automobile traffic on Churchill would exchange the risk of trains for Paly students to an increased risk of car traffic on Paly students and would directly degrade Southgate. Closing Churchill will largely eliminate both car and train risks for Paly students and improve Southgate and Old Palo Alto neighborhoods, while causing only a minimal change in time to drive to Old Palo Alto. Spending inordinate amounts of money to keep Churchill open and increase traffic on Churchill makes no sense.

While being the best solution for several reasons, closing Churchill is also the least expensive option. All available resources should be directed toward improving traffic flow at Embarcadero and Oregon Expressway with optimized interchanges for each of these thoroughfares at both El Camino and Alma. Further investment in those interchanges would have the greatest impact on traffic, while also preserving all the neighborhoods of Palo Alto. To that end, Paly and Town and Country land should be utilized to create a direct interchange of Embarcadero at Alma.

The voices to keep Churchill open should not have more weight just because they are louder. Closing Churchill makes the most sense of the options provided.

Please do what's right and what's best for Palo Alto and close Churchill,
John Day

John W. Day
1560 Mariposa Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94306

From: [Art Small](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [Shaila Sadrozinski](#); [Sally Keyes](#); [Rachel Croft](#); [Sharon Small](#); [Inyoung Cho](#)
Subject: Fwd: Strongly support Churchill Closure
Date: Thursday, August 27, 2020 10:47:11 AM

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

Dear XCAP

First, my apologies for speaking out of turn at the XCAP meeting on August 26, with my thanks for allowing me to complete my time.

Apologies again for having the wrong address for the email below when I sent it on August 25, again with thanks for the attention XCAP has given to all the stakeholders in this complicated and controversial situation.

Art

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

From: Art Small <art.small@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Aug 26, 2020 at 1:38 PM
Subject: Strongly support Churchill Closure
To: <xcap@cityofpaloalto.com>
Cc: Sharon Small <shsmall@gmail.com>, <inyoungcho0@gmail.com>, Shaila Sadrozinski <sadro@pacbell.net>, Sally Keyes <keyesmom@gmail.com>

I'm a Southgate resident who strongly supports closing Churchill at Alma. Although I respect the energy and commitment of the group proposing the underpass, they do not speak for me nor for many of my neighbors.

Briefly, Churchill closure is the best solution because:

- It will restore Churchill as a neighborhood street, safe for bicyclists, pedestrians & Paly kids to cross
- It will save the city many millions of dollars, better spent on health and safety than on trying to save commuters a few minutes drive time

The underpass is undesirable for many reasons:

- It's dangerous-- the underpass will create a high-speed arterial on Churchill, putting pedestrian and cyclist lives at risk
- It's useless - the underpass will not solve the traffic problems it's aimed at -- all the traffic using the Churchill underpass to cross Palo Alto will wind up in the Embarcadero and Oregon intersections any way, leaving them just as congested
- It's ruinously expensive -- and, after investing hundreds of millions in the underpass, the City will still be forced to improve the Embarcadero and

Oregon intersections

- The underpass entails property and access losses and years of construction problems
- The advantage for local residents is trivial -- at best, it may save a few minutes for a trip East of Alma, if that

The viaduct is awful:

- Even more expensive, creates an eyesore in the middle of the city, spreads noise and destroys privacy for many residents, and fails to mitigate the traffic issues we face

If we want a city of the future, we need to make it pedestrian and cyclist friendly; closure achieves that and more. The underpass or viaduct are solutions for the last century!

From: [Lucy Wang](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Strongly Support Churchill Closure
Date: Thursday, August 27, 2020 12:18:35 PM
Attachments: [Churchill Map.pdf](#)

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

*** Please see attached picture to show Churchill and its impact on traffic ***

- A Churchill Ave. bike/pedestrian undercrossing is the only safe option for students
 - A bike/pedestrian undercrossing addresses the well-known safety issue for PALY students biking and walking on Churchill that has not been solved for decades
 - Building a Viaduct will make the safety issue significantly worse due to more and higher speed vehicles on Churchill
 - A bike/pedestrian undercrossing helps students bike to Greene and Walter Hays more safely and quickly

- 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

- 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
- The Churchill Ave. bike/pedestrian undercrossing will help traffic in Embarcadero Rd.
 - There will be significantly fewer bikers on Embarcadero Rd. to slow down the vehicles
 - This is safer for both drivers and bikers
- The Viaduct is an unwanted landmark that will divide Palo Alto
 - Aesthetically, the Viaduct in a low-rise residential area will stick out like a sore thumb.
 - No suburb wants to add this unwanted landmark, definitely not for Palo Alto
 - The Viaduct will split Palo Alto into the east/west, creating an undesirable divide
- The Viaduct will make noise issue much worse, which is impossibly addressed
 - Noise will be from 360 degrees rather than 180 degrees before
 - Noise will propagate much far away without blocking
 - Noise issue is impossible to be addressed particularly on and near Churchill. Sound walls will simply not work

- The Viaduct will introduce serious health and safety hazards
 - Low frequency noise/vibration under the Viaduct
 - Air pollution under the Viaduct
 - Dirty under the viaduct
 - Home for homeless and drug dealers

- The Viaduct will introduce potential legal issues
 - The Viaduct will uproot the lives of families who live in the area.
 - The Viaduct will hurt tens or hundreds of families due to noise, visual, sunlight, air pollution, health, financial, etc. disasters
 - The question remains if the City of Palo Alto/Caltrain has the right to build a 50-70 feet high structure and/or run trains at 20 feet high without the permission of the families in houses next to the structure. These are the people who will be most impacted by the introduction of a Viaduct.
 - This will likely add significant legal costs and compensations to tens or hundreds of families.

- The Viaduct may not be safe, potentially injuring our citizens
 - The trains and high rise structure may fall into backyards or roofs and injure or even kill our citizens, including children who live in the area, during earthquakes or accidents.
 - The question remains, who will be responsible for guaranteeing the safety of the Viaduct? Who will make up for the potential loss of life?

If you supported Viaduct option, please think it again.

- Would you be comfortable with adding a high rise

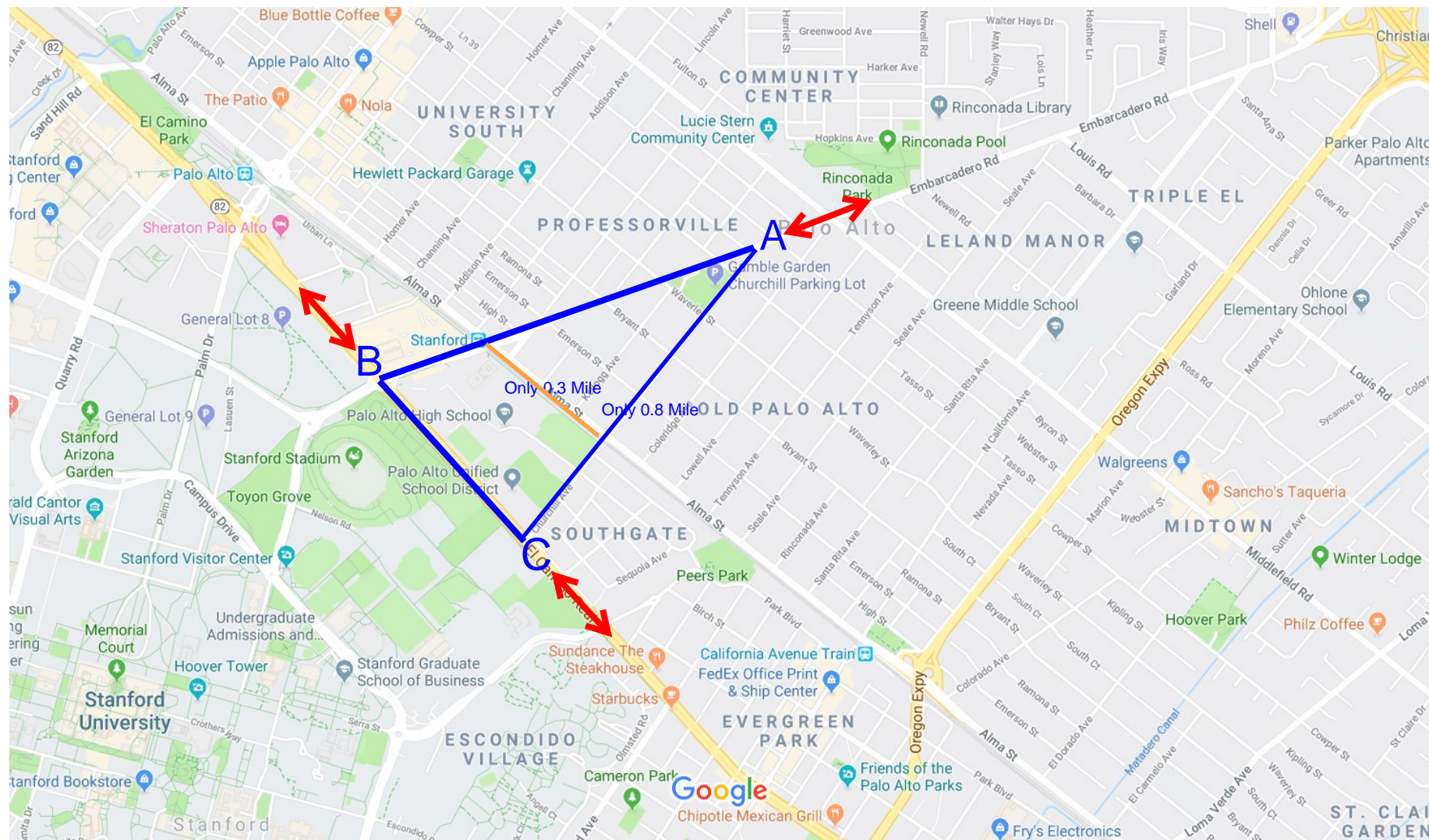
structure like highway/bridge next to your own backyard?

- Would you be comfortable with having a train run next to your roof?
- Would you be comfortable with living in a hazard zone that may injure or even kill your children and family during earthquakes or accidents?
- Would you be comfortable with losing your home and/or significantly losing your home value?
- Would you feel comfortable to support the Viaduct option that makes the lives of your neighbors uprooted because of the disasters in the previous questions?

Let's Stop the Viaduct together!

Traffic Flows In/Out A, B, & C w. Churchill = Traffic Flows In/Out A, B, & C w/o Churchill

- No impact on all the traffic flows that are not to/from the small triangle area
- Churchill railway crossing was mainly for PALY students when there were very few trains decades ago
- Churchill railway crossing is extremely UNSAFE for PALY students, which must be addressed



Map data ©2019 Google 1000 ft

From: [Susan Newman](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#); [Nadia Naik](#)
Cc: [Kamhi, Philip](#); [Shikada, Ed](#); [Council, City](#)
Subject: Comments on the Churchill Deliberations
Date: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 12:01:49 PM

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

Dear XCAP,

As you move into the next, more truly deliberative stage of deliberations on the Churchill crossing, we want to share some observations and concerns about the discussion so far.

1. Is the Partial Underpass Design being treated fairly in your evaluations?

As Nadia pointed out last week, the Partial Underpass has received relatively little design development. As a result, the proposal has unresolved issues, such as where to locate the pump stations, what can be done about the encroachments on the Caltrain ROW, and whether a sliver taking is required. Our impression is that many (most?) **XCAP members are treating these as cons against the proposal rather than as design issues that likely can, as AECOM engineers have indicated, be resolved.** Particularly in light of Caltrain's impending, funded 2-year study of grade separation throughout the corridor, as well as current City budgetary constraints, we seem to have both time and potential Caltrain support for working through these sorts of issues.

Further, it's not at all clear that the Partial Underpass is unique in having unresolved issues; it seems to us that **any alternative will require further investment and study by the City.** Closure, for example, involves widening the Alma Street bridge over Embarcadero. As far as we know, **no detailed engineering study has been done to evaluate the difficulty and expense of that undertaking.** The Viaduct would benefit from an investigation into whether it could be constructed **without a shoofly track** and moved further away from the backyard fences of properties along the track, as Ette has said repeatedly it can.

2. Are the issues around bike/ped travel being treated equitably across designs?

We feel that the issues faced by the Partial Underpass option in building a bike/ped tunnel, whether from Kellogg or Seale, **are the same issues that face both bike/ped tunnel designs for Closure.** First, there is no truly convenient location for a mass bike tunnel in Old Palo Alto. The Kellogg residents don't want a tunnel on their street, but neither will the residents of Seale or even Churchill East. In addition, the issues of how to make the tunnel wide enough, how to manage both bike and pedestrian traffic that will be heavy at the same time of day, and how to avoid blind turns are questions that are faced by the tunnels for Closure as well as the Partial Underpass. Ironically, the most user-friendly tunnel design — a wide tunnel straight down the middle of Churchill — is the one opposed by XCAP's most ardent supporter of Closure, but the alternative tunnel that makes a turn underground faces the same design constraints and concerns as have been discussed in detail in the Partial Underpass case. In fact, difficulties in resolving conflicts over these issues may account for why no one tunnel design was decided on. Surprisingly, it seems to some of us following the development of the

alternatives that if we were to base the decision on bike and ped convenience and safety, it is at least arguable that the Viaduct, which keeps bike/ped traffic visible and above ground, and employing the traffic light to allow bikes and peds to cross separately from cars, may be the best option, and one causing the least disruption of residents' enjoyment of the streets they live on outside of rush hour.

At the very least, **issues accompany bike/ped travel in every design** — the same ones for Closure and the Partial Underpass, a different one for the Viaduct.

3. Are "expert opinions" being treated equitably by XCAP members?

During last week's discussion, the Hexagon traffic study seemed to often be taken as definitive when discussing its support for Closure, but described as insufficient when discussing the other alternatives because it didn't include a study of "induced traffic". If induced traffic is a real concern, further study is certainly required for Embarcadero under the mitigation strategy, as we can easily imagine "induced traffic" there following an improvement of the intersection with Alma. Another rather glaring example is the refusal by some to take the noise and vibration study seriously when it seems to support the Viaduct. We hope that XCAP deliberations will be above this kind of inconsistency, which gives the appearance of bias. If members feel that there are important uncertainties about the reliability of the studies that have been done, then recommendations should not rely on the studies at all. Indeed, perhaps XCAP should hold off on making a final recommendation and instead provide the kind of detailed discussion of the options and the unknowns for each that you considered earlier in the summer.

4. Is it all about aesthetics?

Many of the comments about both the Viaduct and the Partial Underpass turned on what appeared to be "gut" feelings about what is beautiful or elegant. Some of us believe that the requirement to "minimize visual change" was initially included to make it harder to approve the Viaduct. Within the XCAP, even those making strong arguments for the superiority of this design in avoiding off-loading traffic problems from one neighborhood to another or in facilitating east-west connectivity, mentioned "aesthetics" as one of its "cons". The Partial Underpass was described as a "kluge" or just with an "ugh". And of course some members of the public have called both options "monstrous". By contrast, closing Churchill has been depicted, rather lovingly, as creating a parklike oasis along Alma.

However, we feel that images of the Partial Underpass created with an eye to aesthetics are very pleasing, and that the Viaduct could be made an attractive element in the cityscape with the right design aesthetic and comparable attention to landscaping. Looking at the many blocked roads into College Terrace and along the tracks in Redwood City proves that this option does not have to be attractive. We urge XCAP to recommend the best solution(s) based on more measurable criteria and to recommend, in all cases, that collectively we put resources into making the chosen option pleasant.

We write this in hopes of encouraging a deep and thoughtful deliberation about this very important decision that will deeply affect the experience of Palo Altans in moving about the

city for decades to come.

Thank you for your thoughtful .

Susan Newman

on behalf of a collection of residents in Southgate and Professorville (names to come)

Susan Newman

1523 Portola Avenue

Palo Alto CA 94306

650.473.1811 (h)

650.380.1764 (c)

snewman@workpractice.com

snewzy@gmail.com