

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 **September 2 and September 9, 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: [Susan Newman](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#); [Nadia Naik](#)
Cc: [Kamhi, Philip](#); [Shikada, Ed](#); [Council, City](#)
Subject: Comments on the Churchill Deliberations (edited for typos)
Date: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 1:31:29 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 along Kellogg or Seale, **are the same as those facing the 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 accommodate both bike and pedestrian traffic that is 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 solely on bike and ped convenience and safety, it is at least arguable that building a 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, might be the best option — or at least the one causing the least disruption of residents' enjoyment of the streets they live on.

At the very least, **issues arise for 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 often to be taken as definitive when discussing its support for Closure, but was seen 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 as XCAP goes forward, the 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 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 in AECOM images 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 the City put resources into making the chosen option appealing.

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 consideration.

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

From: [Deborah Hope](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Railway
Date: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 7:44:09 PM

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

Please place the following people on your email list whenever there is a discussion regarding the railway in Palo Alto.

Sincerely,
Deborah Ellison Hope

Deborah.e.hope@gmail.com

Spilkerton@roadrunner.com

Cheri.carroll@outlook.com

Sheilamhope@yahoo.com

Hope.allie@gmail.com

--

Deb Ellison-Hope
650.400.0755 cell

From: [Michael Price](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Response to the XCAP meeting of 8/26
Date: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 1:21:33 PM

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Greetings,

I listened to the XCAP meeting on Wednesday, 8/26, at which I heard, for the first time, the opinions of the committee about the Churchill alternatives. From these I see a definite bias towards closing the crossing.

I have four primary concerns:

1. The Partial Underpass options has received relatively little engineering effort. This was acknowledged during the XCAP meeting ("ran out of money"). Several questions are left unanswered, such as resolving whether Caltrain will agree to encroachment on their right-of-way and where the pump station should be placed. These are considered by XCAP members as significant negatives rather than design issues to be addressed. However, when asked directly, AECOM admitted these are not insurmountable issues and would be dealt with during detailed project design.
2. The AECOM design was criticized as ugly. I agree. It was done with a freeway aesthetic. Michael Chacon did a far better job of design on the original proposal, paying attention to elements that softened the visual impact, helping it look more organic. A proper design, by someone with taste and the proper motivation, could produce a more pleasing result. Far more effort was given to the aesthetics of the Closure options.
3. The bicycle and pedestrian tunnel is a concern, mainly for being too narrow and its effect on the neighborhoods. This is a red herring. All designs for crossing Alma and Caltrain from Old Palo Alto face the same problem: there are no convenient locations in Old Palo Alto for a crossing. The Kellogg residents don't want one on their street, but neither will anyone on Churchill or Seale or any other street. Eliminating the tunnel under Alma decreases safety by requiring bikes/pedestrains to mix with Alma traffic. The tunnel objections apply to closing Churchill and the Partial Underpass equally. The Viaduct wins in this regard since it requires no tunnel, but it does require bicycles and pedestrians to mix with traffic at the crossing. Some cleverness in the design of a bike/pedestrian crossing is needed.
4. The traffic study was cited as definitive, when discussing Closure, but was described as insufficient when discussing the other alternatives because, for example, it didn't include "induced traffic". One can imagine "induced traffic" on Embarcadero following an improvement of the intersection with Alma to mitigate Closure. This inconsistency gives the appearance of bias.

Other issues were raised that have received little attention. One such is disaster response. Closing Churchill cuts off Southgate from Alma. How does this affect evacuation in an urban wildfire (once thought impossible, now not so much). What is the effect on the neighborhood of after a major earthquake (a near certainty)? Concerns about Closure have been dismissed as merely complaints about convenience. That is hardly the case.

Reducing routes through the city is a bad idea and should be rejected.

Mike

From: [Kellerman, Thomas W.](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [Shikada, Ed](#); [Council, City](#); [Rachel Kellerman](#)
Subject: XCAP Report
Date: Wednesday, September 2, 2020 1:27:49 PM
Attachments: [XCAP Letter - Sept 2 2020.docx](#)

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Ladies and Gentlemen:

Please see the attached letter. Thank you.

Tom

Thomas W. Kellerman

1400 Page Mill Road | Palo Alto, CA 94304

Direct: +1.650.843.7550 | Mobile: +1.650.283.5023 | Main: +1.650.843.4000 | Fax: +1.650.843.4001

thomas.kellerman@morganlewis.com

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

September 2, 2020

Palo Alto Expanded Community
Advisory Panel
250 Hamilton Ave., #7
Palo Alto, CA 94301-2531

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We understand that the Palo Alto Expanded Community Advisory Panel (XCAP) will be preparing a report to the City Council setting forth its findings and recommendations with respect to potential modifications at several at-grade rail crossings in Palo Alto. As you prepare your report, we ask that you please include a possible approach and certain related design considerations with respect to the Churchill crossing. These suggestions are intended to accomplish goals set forth in the City's Comprehensive plan to improve East/West connectivity for bicycles and pedestrians, and would allow City staff and leadership to formulate a Churchill rail-crossing plan that aligns with Caltrain's ongoing work on rail-crossing design and implementation. If adopted, this approach would enable the City to take advantage of any transportation funds that may become available to build a new bike/ped tunnel and to improve existing bicycle pathways.

As you are aware, the proposed mitigations associated with the Churchill closing proposal are expressly designated as "conceptual" by Hexagon in their final traffic report. In addition, in its 2018 action designating rail-crossing alternatives to be considered, the City Council specifically required that any Churchill closure must include mitigations that address redirected traffic onto adjacent residential streets.¹ Hexagon has informed the XCAP that their conceptual mitigation proposal focused solely on Level of Service (LOS), so other factors will still need to be taken into consideration before a final solution is approved. It is important that the XCAP report clearly informs the City Council of which factors have been incorporated into the recommended actions and which factors have not been addressed.

¹ <https://cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?t=83343.25&BlobID=65728>

We recommend that the XCAP adopt an approach that incorporates the following principal elements:

1. Study a Seale bike/ped tunnel as an alternative to a Churchill bike/ped tunnel. This alternative has been discussed but never studied. An under-Alma tunnel at Seale would alleviate bike/ped crossings at Churchill, resulting in increased safety. This alternative would be safer than a crossing at an intersection with a traffic light as proposed at Churchill, as there will be less car traffic on Seale.²
2. Redesign and implement the Kingsley/Embarcadero bike/ped pathway previously designed in 2016. Given the high volume of bicycle and pedestrian traffic on the north side of Embarcadero and the significant increases in vehicular traffic on this corridor that would result from the proposed Churchill closure, additional safety measures will be essential on this pathway. These improvements, when added to the proposed bike/ped overpass west of the tracks, will not only improve bike/ped safety but also improve LOS on Embarcadero Road for car traffic.³
3. For now, adopt the “CAN” “No Build Safety Upgrades” option that was proposed to Council in 2018.⁴ If a bike/ped tunnel is constructed at Seale, closing Churchill becomes an easy exercise should the City and the Council decide this is necessary due to increased train service and resulting traffic congestion. Delaying a decision on closure of Churchill will allow the City, including the Planning and Transportation Commission, to carefully study and adopt a more comprehensive solution in accordance with the requirements set forth by the City Council in its 2018 resolution.

Thank you for your continued efforts.

Very truly yours,

Thomas W. Kellerman
Rachel H. Kellerman

Cc: Palo Alto City Council
Ed Shikada, City Manager

² <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/38025> Page 44

³ <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/53341>

⁴ <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/64134> Page 8

From: [Madhu](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Fwd: Support for Churchill Closure
Date: Thursday, September 3, 2020 5:26:31 PM

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From: Madhu <madhu.rao@gmail.com>
Date: August 26, 2020 at 2:22:30 PM PDT
Subject: Support for Churchill Closure

Hi, I am resident at Mariposa Ave. I have read and researched all the options being considered for Churchill crossing, and I support Churchill Closure.

Main reasons for my support for the closure are the following

- It's visually the most appealing (vs Viaduct)
- it's the least expensive and will cause the least construction disruptions or taking away parts of Paly or other land
- it actually streams line the flow of traffic, vs the new hybrid option, which after all the expense still won't allow traffic in all directions
- there are numerous connecting streets between El Camino and Alma, within a mile on each side, traffic studies are not indicating any adverse affect and the money will be better spent in improving flow of traffic all along alma and el Camino
- most of all the pedestrians and bikers will have better and safer access to Paly and around this area.

Thank you for the consideration.

Madhu
1519 Mariposa

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Nadia Naik](#)
 To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
 Subject: Fwd: Virtual Town Hall for train separations EXTENDED! Please give feedback
 Date: Thursday, September 3, 2020 5:19:01 PM
 Attachments: [Image.png](#)

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This is just an FYI - please do not reply all.

Town Hall has been extended until 9/14

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

From: **Nadia Naik** <nadianaik@gmail.com>
 Date: Thu, Sep 3, 2020 at 5:15 PM
 Subject: Virtual Town Hall for train separations EXTENDED! Please give feedback
 To: PAN <panneighborhoods@googlegroups.com>, opana_news <opana_news@googlegroups.com>

Dear PAN Reprs and Neighborhoods,

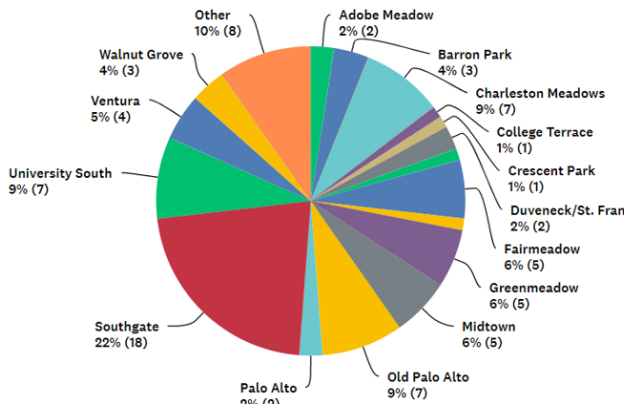
Just a reminder that the Virtual Town Hall is still available (www.vrpalto.com) - please be sure to take a look and provide feedback! **I've just been informed the Virtual Town Hall has been extended until September 14th.**

Neighbors who visited the virtual town hall and provided feedback were asked what neighborhood they're from. Here's the graph showing a snapshot of the most recent distribution of visitors that was provided to me from the City:

General Feedback Report

Which neighborhood do you reside in/represent? (select one)

Answered: 82 Skipped: 1



Data is recorded at 11:00pm 9/3

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Adobe Meadow	2% (2)
Barron Park	4% (3)
Charleston Gardens	0% (0)
Charleston Meadows	9% (7)
Charleston Village	0% (0)
College Terrace	1% (1)
Community Center	0% (0)
Crescent Park	1% (1)
Downtown North	0% (0)
Duveneck/St. Fran	2% (2)
Evergreen Park	1% (1)
Fairmeadow	6% (5)
Greenmeadow	6% (5)
Greenmeadow 1 or 2	1% (1)
Greenmeadow	0% (0)
Greenhouse	0% (0)
Greenmeadow	6% (5)
Leland Manor	0% (0)
Mayfield	0% (0)
Meadow Park	0% (0)
Midtown	6% (5)
Miranda Neighbors	0% (0)
Monroe Park	0% (0)
Old Palo Alto	9% (7)
Palo Alto	2% (2)
Palo Alto Hills	0% (0)
Palo Alto Orchards	0% (0)
Palo Verde	0% (0)
Professorville	0% (0)
Southgate	22% (18)
Triple E	0% (0)
University South	9% (7)
Ventura	5% (4)
Walnut Grove	4% (3)
Professorville	0% (0)
Other	10% (8)
TOTAL	Responses 10% 82

Please encourage everyone to visit the site and offer feedback - help spread the word!

www.vrpalto.com

Thanks,
 Nadia Naik
 Old Palo Alto (and Chair of the Expanded Community Advisory Panel on grade separations).

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

From: **Wilson, Sarah** <Sarah.Wilson@cityofpalto.org>
 Date: Wed, Aug 19, 2020 at 7:15 PM
 Subject: Virtual Town Hall for train separations is now live
 To: PAN <panneighborhoods@googlegroups.com>, opana_news <opana_news@googlegroups.com>

Dear Neighbors,

Please visit the VIRTUAL Town Hall that shows the alternatives being considered for the train separations (grade separations) at the intersections of Alma/Churchill, Alma/Meadow and Alma/Charleston.

Please forward! And please give feedback!

Nadia

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

From: **Wilson, Sarah** <Sarah.Wilson@cityofpalto.org>
 Date: Wed, Aug 19, 2020 at 5:04 PM
 Subject: Virtual Town Hall is now live
 To: Kamhi, Philip <Philip.Kamhi@cityofpalto.org>, Bhatia, Ripon <Ripon.Bhatia@cityofpalto.org>
 CC: Shikada, Ed <Ed.Shikada@cityofpalto.org>, Horrigan-Taylor, Meghan <Meghan.Horrigan-Taylor@cityofpalto.org>

Greetings XCAP members,

The Virtual Town Hall is now live! Please share this info with community members.

Here is the link to the [Virtual Town Hall](#) which runs August 19 through September 7.

Here is the link to the [Virtual Town Hall Tutorial Video](#).

There will be two Virtual Town Hall Q & A Sessions: August 27 at 4:00 p.m. and September 3 at 4:00 p.m.

Questions & comments submitted during the Virtual Town Hall will be addressed during these sessions.

Here is the link to use when the Q & A sessions are live: [Virtual Town Hall Q & A Sessions](#).

The [Connecting Palo Alto](#) web site includes this info on the home page and the [Connecting Palo Alto calendar](#). The info is also on the [City calendar](#).

Please let us know if you spot any technical issues.

Thank you,

Sarah Wilson

Administrative Assistant, Office of Transportation

City of Palo Alto

Sarah.Wilson@CityofPaloAlto.org

(650) 329-2552

From: [Martin J Sommer](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [Transportation](#)
Subject: Grade Separation Feedback
Date: Thursday, September 3, 2020 3:51:20 AM

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

Hello,

I've watched all your VR videos, and think this is a "solution, in search of a problem". I suggest that we wait and see: a) how Covid-19 affects long term commutes, b) how an electrified Caltain system operates, and it's affect on auto traffic, and c) if and when HSR materializes.

Right now, we have our schools closed, businesses leaving town, and University Ave drying up. Let's focus, on what really matters!

Sincerely,
Martin

--
Martin Sommer
650-346-5307
martin@sommer.net
www.linkedin.com/in/martinsommer

"Turn technical vision into reality."

From: [Phil Burton](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [Shikada, Ed](#); [Bhatia, Ripon](#)
Subject: NextDoor thread on Charleston and Meadow crossings - PLEASE DO NOT REPLY
Date: Saturday, September 5, 2020 1:11:45 PM
Attachments: [Nextdoor thread on Charleston and Meadow crossings 2020-09-05.pdf](#)


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A Nextdoor thread accessible to me, but perhaps not to everyone else.


PER BROWN ACT, please do not reply to this email. Please do forward to anyone who should have been on this email.

Phil Burton



 Post a **message**, **event**, **poll** or **alert** to your neighborhood

 (?language=en_US) **34 new comments** added by your neighbors


 **Robert Neff (/profile/3684727/)** 
 South of Midtown • 4 days ago (/news_feed/?post=159901787)

Both Charleston and Meadow crossings to close for years. (/news_feed/?post=159901787) Got your attention? That's a possible impact from one of the grade separation options. So please go to the grade crossing Virtual Town Hall, take a look, and give feedback, about what you like, or don't, about the proposals, including a look at costs, look at aspects of the final outcome, look at neighborhood impacts.

(Unfortunately, that closure is for most of the 3.5-4 year construction time for one of the Charleston/Meadow alternatives.)



The Virtual Town Hall is cool, and now is a good time to give feedback. Here is the link: <https://vrpalocalto.com> (<https://vrpalocalto.com>)


It closes on Sept. 7.

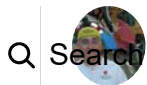
 Palo... storage.r > (<https://flask.us.nextdoor.com/ct/nM41f3EyVw97KkyAB7Kpl-LRdAD4iqfE2dbllWg8-EajZj2XSI2v8Vr80AaU5LLc>)

Posted in **General (/general/)** to **42 neighborhoods**

 Like  **34 Comments**  8

 **Joyce Freiberg (/profile/5238333/)** • South of Midtown 
 Thank you for posting this monumental work. I wonder what the costs are for each of the proposed projects. Also, I think there may be an aquifer in the area. I wonder if that has been considered.

4 days ago **Like** **Reply**  1



William Robinson (/profile/4463357/) • Charleston Meadows

Robert and I are concerned about the projects that close east-west traffic across CalTrain tracks. Also, projects that require temporary train tracks or lane closures on Alma have "costs". If Meadow or Charleston are closed at any time, how do students and employees find safe alternates?

4 days ago Like Reply 2



Tanya Berlaga (/profile/6549496/) • Green Acres I

I support that. This will greatly reduce traffic and make those intersections a lot less dangerous. Yes, it will be an inconvenience for a few years, but looking forward it needs to be done. I lived in Redwood Shores when they did the grade separation on Rallston - it was a pain in the butt during construction, but when it was done it's much better.

4 days ago Like Reply 1



Anna Wichansky (/profile/941644/) • Palo Alto Orchards

Tanya how long did it take?

3 days ago Like Reply 3



Tanya Berlaga (/profile/6549496/) • Green Acres I

It was many years ago so I don't remember exactly. It took a while. 2 years at least. I remember there was a lot of traffic and frustration by everybody, but once it was done, the intersections became a lot easier to navigate, not to mention much safer.

3 days ago Like Reply 1



Anna Wichansky (/profile/941644/) • Palo Alto Orchards

Good to know. I work up there, and it is highly commercialized and industrial-looking at that intersection. Not a place I'd want a residence.

3 days ago Like Reply 1



Michael Wessel (/profile/50667323/) • Walnut Grove

Well it is easy to support something that doesn't effect you. I wonder how you would feel if it was in your backyard.

17 hr ago Like Reply






Michael Wessel (/profile/50667323/) • Walnut Grove






This project will make our place inhabitable for years to come.

17 hr ago Like Reply






Add a reply...

 Search  **Arthur Cohen (/profile/2799470/)** • Midtown 

A lot of work has gone into this website. A summary sheet of the alternatives is : https://storage.net-fs.com/hosting/6566581/3/files/file_182F1D0F_3198_1C34_41C6_3D0B250F86A8.pdf (https://storage.net-fs.com/hosting/6566581/3/files/file_182F1D0F_3198_1C34_41C6_3D0B250F86A8.pdf)

4 days ago Like Reply  2

 **Patrice Banal (/profile/1066443/)** • Walnut Grove 

Hello all,

I do agree a lot of work has gone into vetting the various options and, a necessary inconvenience is quite a different scenario to either losing access to your street FOR YEARS, or losing your home entirely-the fate of some owners on Charleston Road if the underpass option is picked.


I have attended years of meetings on this subject and still cannot profess to know what the optimal design should be or how we could ever afford to fund it.







I do know that I will be voting AGAINST the Charleston underpass option-the one that turns Charleston Rd into Embarcadero South and includes a roundabout made using Eminent Domain, my neighbors' homes, and potentially part of my property.

Charleston Road residence have lived under the cloud of eminent domain and losing our homes for years-it impacts our selling, relocating, making renovations, even committing to jobs, and our kids' school choices. Imagine losing your home, neighborhood, community, and school all in the name of progress - this is what we and our kids will be facing. This is even more difficult considering there are NO affordable options available in Palo Alto once our properties are taken.


My elderly neighbor just found out her home would be one of the "impacted" properties if the Charleston Road underpass/roundabout option is picked. She has yet to receive any direct outreach from committee members to discuss.


Charleston Road is a pathway to many schools-Hoover, Fairmeadow, JLS, Challenger, Kehillah, Gunn, community centers-Cubberly, Mitchell Park, the Library, community services Achieve Kids, Abilities United, Stevenson House, After-school Kids' Clubs, putting more traffic on this road makes no sense. We are hoping our neighbors and city council will see the wisdom in NOT turning Charleston Road into a glorified freeway artery. This will no doubt be a challenging undertaking for all. Thanks for reading.

4 days ago Like Reply  7


 Search  **Eileen Fagan (/profile/399199/)** • Southgate
  16 (inbox/)  100 


And adding to this...they are strongly considering closing Churchill Ave permanently. Leave comments on the Virtual Town Hall.

4 days ago **Like Reply**  1


 **Robert Neff (/profile/3684727/)** • South of Midtown ▼


The project alternatives all list construction times, costs, and complications like acquifers, and details of the features for every option. Yes, some of the alternatives close Churchill permanently. So don't ask questions here, follow the link, and let the staff know what you think!


4 days ago **Like Reply**  2

 **Kk Gandhi (/profile/1084143/)** • Charleston Meadows ▼



While there is quite a bit of info, i was unable to find certain important details(dunno if i just didn't know exactly where to look for them) -- eg. which turning options at the meadow-alma intersection will not be available and which properties may be taken for the underpass option.


2 days ago **Like Reply**  1

 See 2 more replies


 **Kk Gandhi (/profile/1084143/)** • Charleston Meadows ▼


Here is the summary matrix https://storage.net-fs.com/hosting/6566581/3/files/file_571F3A7B_4A1C_1626_41B0_ACAE6BD26185.pdf (https://storage.net-fs.com/hosting/6566581/3/files/file_571F3A7B_4A1C_1626_41B0_ACAE6BD26185.pdf) I paid close attention to rows A, F and H. Just to point out that some options curtail turning lanes at the meadow-alma intersection and need property acquisitions. Please folks...look at it and provide feedback.

3 days ago **Like Reply**   2



 **Anna Wichansky (/profile/941644/)** • Palo Alto Orchards ▼

Exactly where do we post our comments?

3 days ago **Like Reply**  1

 **Anna Wichansky (/profile/941644/)** • Palo Alto Orchards ▼

I am happy to read neighbors feedback, as always, before posting my own comments, so thank you all for participating on NDN.

3 days ago **Like Reply**   2



Kk Gandhi (/profile/1084143/) • Charleston Meadows

10
 6 (/inbox/)
 100



I'm from XCAP member: So while the tunnel is still on the Council's list, the XCAP recommendation will not include the tunnel. This leaves the trench as the only lowered-rail option still under XCAP consideration.

The current Charleston/Meadow alternatives:

- 1) Viaduct (Rail raised on 20-foot structure)
- 2) Hybrid (Rail raised on 15-foot berm)
- 3) Trench (Rail lowered under Charleston/Meadow)
- 4) Underpass (Charleston/Meadow lowered under Rail and Alma)

3 days ago Like Reply



William Robinson (/profile/4463357/) • Charleston Meadows



Virtual Town Hall comments are entered after reviewing detail by clicking "Go back to Alternative Selection". see photo



(https://d3926qxcw0e1bh.cloudfront.net/post_photos/e4/3a

[/e43ae6dece9c480bba21e3dacc060b7d.jpg](#))

3 days ago Like Reply





Hillel Gazit (/profile/17766551/) • Ventura



Please stop giving the city even more bad ideas. Over the years I had seen the city doing:

1. It forced the "All American Market" to close because nobody really needs food and everybody needs video stores.
2. Refused to let Lucky expand and so it had to close. Again, the great belief that nobody needs food and driving to Mountain View for grocery shopping would reduce GHG.
3. Narrow Charleston to one lane to ensure traffic jams every morning and afternoon.
4. Add traffic circles that make bicycling more dangerous.
5. Narrow El Camino Way so biking has to block the lane to cars, causing cars to make dangerous passes.
6. The grand Maybell project that only a voters revolt managed to block.
7. Closing the bike under-path in the end of Meadow.

You let them know that blocking Charleston and/or Meadow will be a real hardship on us. The most likely result is that the city will decide to do just that.

Please consider it.

2 days ago **Like** **Reply**



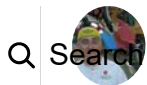
Michael Slack (/profile/8594365/) • Greater Mitchell Park



Well said. In the last 15 years I have witnessed all you said here. And no matter who's on city council - they don't listen. Nor does the city consider creating lighted crosswalks - like Mt. View has had for years - to save pedestrian lives (or even encourage pedestrians). I don't know what our city leaders do for a living, but it sure isn't think about residents, plan wisely to benefit all, and act cautiously. Thank you for your clear writing.

2 days ago **Like** **Reply**





William Robinson (/profile/4463357/) • Charleston Meadows



Turning movements restricted in Underpass option is chosen for Meadow and Charleston. Illustrations are from Hexagon Traffic Report to the City and Consultant 8/13/2020 pages 21 and 23. Not sure both illustrations uploaded.



([https://d3926qxcw0e1bh.cloudfront.net/post_photos/eb/43](https://d3926qxcw0e1bh.cloudfront.net/post_photos/eb/43/eb431902c731f253952cf6910194c6b3.jpg)

[/eb431902c731f253952cf6910194c6b3.jpg](#))

2 days ago Like Reply



Kk Gandhi (/profile/1084143/) • Charleston Meadows



thanks i see the one for charleston but not meadow...

2 days ago Like Reply



➔ See 2 more replies



Michael Wessel (/profile/50667323/) • Walnut Grove



I agree with Patrice Banal that the Meadow / Charleston underpass is very problematic for a number of reasons:

1. at least 3 properties will have to be taken to accomodate the underpass and roundabout and Meadow right turn to Alma. And one property will be severely impacted by having the roundabout in the front yard. I find it *almost deceptive* that the video detailing the construction process

<https://storage.net-fs.com/hosting/6566581/3/index.htm> (<https://storage.net-fs.com/hosting/6566581/3/index.htm>)

is sweeping the property impacts under the carpet! The impact on trees is given more emphasis than the impact on these properties. This is unacceptable IMHO. The video should at least discuss the impact on the properties and not glance over it.







2. I don't understand why Ely needs to be closed to right turns from northbound Alma traffic. This forces ALL the traffic through the roundabout. What for? Is it not better to distribute and diversify the flow?

3. the large number of required accomodations for bicyclists and pedestrians to ensure that they can still go places and cross the tracks - of course this is required with the underpass then, but it seems that there are more straightforward solutions available than all of this.


So I will vote *against the underpass* option as well.




15 hr ago Like Reply



 Search  **Michael Wessel (/profile/50667323/)** • Walnut Grove    


We might start an online petition against the underpass. We will then post it here.



15 hr ago Like Reply  1

  **Nancy Neff (/profile/14964896/)** • South of Midtown 

Here are my thoughts, which I have submitted as feedback on <https://vrpaloalto.com> (<https://vrpaloalto.com>). Living near Meadow, I am just looking at Meadow and Charleston. I think Hybrid is best and cheapest, and Viaduct second best. They are the least disruptive during construction and make the least change in how we travel through the intersections. Probably about equal for looks except that Viaduct is 5 feet higher and does not have room for tall shrubs/trees between trains and Alma, while Hybrid does. I'm guessing Hybrid might maintain a more normal neighborhood feel. But it's only a short distance, so cost, ease of travel, and not disrupting private property are more important to me. Hybrid also has the advantage of maintaining 1% grade for the trains, while Viaduct is 1.4%



Trench and tunnels are too expensive and underpass has multiple problems.

14 hr ago Like Reply  3

 **Kk Gandhi (/profile/1084143/)** • Charleston Meadows 



i can see where you're coming from...my view on that is for the sake of 5 ft elevation, why disrupt the roadway? any grade in the road makes it more difficult for older and the little ones to bike/walk easily. cars accelerating (what! does that happen here!:) tend to go faster with the downhill grade..line of sight is obstructed -- less safe imho, and issues with rainwater pooling. so if we absolutely cannot put the train underground (not the underpass option --ugh), might as well bite the bullet and keep our roads at grade (better for bike/ped) and go with the viaduct option.

14 hr ago Like Reply  1

 **Nancy Neff (/profile/14964896/)** • South of Midtown 


I can see that viewpoint as well. I wonder if Caltrain has the option to just say no to a 1.4% grade.


14 hr ago Like Reply  1


 **Kk Gandhi (/profile/1084143/)** • Charleston Meadows 


Nancy Neff (/profile/14964896) If i remember right, upto 1.8% is ok by Caltrain. Last year, when the tunnel was being considered, one of the big things was to see if caltrain would approve the 2% grade needed.


13 hr ago Like Reply  1

 Add a reply...



Nancy Neff (/profile/14964896/) • South of Midtown
16 (inbox/)



 There are two places to leave feedback on the website. To find them, click on <https://vrpaloalto.com/> (<https://vrpaloalto.com/>) and wait for it to go past the first screen; I think clicking anywhere on the second screen gets you to the third screen where one feedback form is available at the bottom of the page. This form asks for your top choice. To get to the more detailed feedback forms, you can click and hold and move your view of the room until you can see Meadow/Charleston on the map. Click on that and you get a black box with the various options in a row of boxes; below that is a green "Feedback" button. When you click on it you get to a dropdown to choose which option you are leaving feedback for. You can do that over and over until you have given feedback on all the ones you want to.

13 hr ago Like Reply  2



Michael Wessel (/profile/50667323/) • Walnut Grove
✓

Thanks Nancy, I have left my feedback and comments there as well.

13 hr ago Like Reply  1


 Add a comment...

✓ More posts from your neighbors


 (https://help.nextdoor.com/s/article/How-to-connect-with-your-public-agencies?language=en_US) This is a post from one of your **local agencies**


Bay Area Air Quality Management District (/agency-detail/ca/bay-area
✓

Public Information Officer Communications Office (/profile/44501592/) • 42 min ago



Spare the Air Alert extended through Monday, 9/7. (/news_feed/?post=160432553)The Spare the Air Alert has been extended through Mon., Sept. 7 for smog pollution. Limit driving to help reduce air pollution and protect your health by avoiding outdoor activities during the hottest part of the day when

See more...

From: [Shannon McEntee](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#); [Council, City](#)
Subject: Planning Churchill Crossing
Date: Saturday, September 5, 2020 11:14:11 PM

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

Dear City Council and XCAP:

It would be a huge mistake to close Churchill to vehicular traffic. Doing so would further overwhelm our very few cross town roads with still more traffic, especially during rush hour. That congestion not only wastes drivers' time, it also causes more air pollution and more noise pollution for the neighborhoods on our few crosstown roads.

We need to keep Churchill open, whatever the cost. To close it will negatively impact our city through the balance of this century. Stay focused on what we need, and not on the cost of the infrastructure. We have to keep all our east-west through streets functioning.

Sincerely,

Shannon Rose McEntee
410 Sheridan Avenue
Palo Alto

From: [Deborah Ju](#)
To: [Transportation: Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Charleston Railroad Crossing Grade Separation
Date: Sunday, September 6, 2020 1:59:25 PM

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

Dear Transportation Department Staff and XCAP members.

My family has lived in the Charleston Meadows neighborhood for 35 years. It is a warm, close-knit and beautiful community. While we live closer to Wilkie Way than to Alma, train noise has been a constant annoyance that disturbs our peace and our sleep. I have reviewed the design options and urge you to **please choose an option that puts the train tracks below ground**. That is the only option that would keep the train noise level manageable for our neighborhood, and the only option that is not aesthetically horrible.

Please do **not** choose any option that raises the height the train travels on, as that would greatly increase the volume of train noise. Additionally, please consider the visual impact of the design. When I pass under concrete viaducts in other communities I always feel sorry for the people who live in the neighborhoods divided by such a structure and who have to look at the ugly monstrosity every day.

I am aware that the consultants eliminated the tunnel option for the Charleston crossing. In my opinion, they were intent on doing this all along, no matter what input they received. It seemed to me that the majority of residents in this area favored the tunnel option. I strongly object to a process by whereby non-elected people eliminate the most popular option. The consultant is not accountable to the residents of Palo Alto, whereas the City government is. The trench option is far superior than the other remaining options, however the tunnel option is the best option and it should still be on the table.

I realize that the tunnel and trench may not be the cheapest options and perhaps not the easiest, We are creating something that all of us will have to look at every single day. It is not an overstatement to say that it could be an eyesore forever into the future if it is not done well. Palo Alto has an international reputation as a City of engineers and innovators. Let's honor that tradition by picking the best design for the community and then finding a way to make it happen.

Sincerely,

Deborah Ju
371 Whitclem Drive
Palo Alto



Virus-free. www.avg.com

From: [Werner Ju](#)
To: [Transportation: Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Charleston Railroad Crossing
Date: Sunday, September 6, 2020 9:35:14 PM

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

Dear Transportation Department Staff and XCAP members,

I am a resident of the Charleston Meadows Neighborhood and am requesting that you reject all plans that would negatively impact our family-oriented neighborhood with yet more noise than what we already have now. The best choice for our neighborhood and for Palo Alto is to select the below ground option. Our quality of life is already disturbed by the current Cal Train track and its noisy trains coming by throughout the day. With the new electric train with even more routes than what we already have now, the above ground track options would only increase the noise we would have to live with. If you had a choice, please consider what option you would choose for your own neighborhood.

Thank you,

Werner Ju
371 Whitclem Drive

From: [ROBERT OHLMANN](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Connecting Palo Alto
Date: Sunday, September 6, 2020 10:57:27 AM

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

I am a 51-year resident of Palo Alto and I have been following the technical discussions about the rail crossings at East Meadow, Charleston and Churchill for some time. As a retired engineer I have several comments I think you might find useful.

First, with regards to the Churchill crossing, I vote for the Churchill Partial Underpass solution as I think the alternatives are too ugly and inconvenient. Closing the Churchill crossing will spill much traffic to local residential street to get to an alternative crossing. Note how difficult it is to go West on Embarcadero from Alma without traveling the residential streets. Its cost is also reasonable compared to the Viaduct and will not place an eyesore at a high sightline.

As far as the Charleston and East Meadow Crossing, I'm torn between the Viaduct solution and the Trench. The cost of the Viaduct is about half the cost of the Trench and its appearance seems acceptable, although several back gardens will have to endure passing trains in sight (and noise) until the trees grow tall enough to block the view. For the latter reason I would prefer the Trench solution if we can find the funding to accomplish that solution.

The Trench solution needs further work. It is not clear that the maximum slope of the track cannot be somewhat less than 2% if the slope was spread out further North and South. The drawing does not show where the track needs to descend, either North or South, and what the limitation of the next part of the track is that requires that slope.

Also, the groundwater elevation shows that the trench will block ground water flow for about 3800 feet, and a single pump station in the middle is probably not going to accommodate the expected flow rate. A natural solution is to have a foot-wide trench of gravel on the West side of the trench and 1-foot-diameter pipes under the road every 20 feet to allow the ground water to pass naturally under the track bed without pumping.

Thank you for your efforts.

Bob Ohlmann
650-494-3726

From: [Neil Shea](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [Transportation; City Mgr](#)
Subject: Feedback for XCAP & City on Rail Corridor Options
Date: Sunday, September 6, 2020 2:05:08 PM

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

Dear XCAP members and city stakeholders,

Big thanks to everyone for your countless hours of work helping our city –understanding tradeoffs, asking questions, brainstorming options and thinking about our future. Transportation in general and the rail corridor in particular are fundamental to our future, so this time is well invested and we appreciate your work very much.

Now that we are closing in on final choices and recommendations, my family and I want to offer some brief input. We live at 800 High Street, 1 block from the rail corridor, right at the Homer Avenue ped/bike undercrossing, part of our wonderful trail network reaching schools, parks, shopping, healthcare and many neighborhoods. We often walk, ride bikes and take infants in the stroller (leaving the cars parked) because for us this is the most direct, healthy, pleasant and enjoyable way to experience our wonderful community - including errands and shopping.

We see many families, students, young people, professionals and even visitors doing the same. It reminds us of some of our best experiences travelling, e.g. outside of the US, enjoying pedestrian zones, fresh air, smiles, and a less hectic pace - rather than stuck in traffic. We certainly use our cars when truly needed, but increasingly our cars are not necessarily always the best way for every errand and interaction within our local area.

For us the #1 item of feedback is to:

Please Protect and Prioritize Active Transportation options in all plans – including Strollers and Wheelchairs as well as Pedestrians and Bicyclists. Please do not send us up and down long ramps and tunnels that may smell of urine, be hidden from daylight, unclean, and/or in any way less than completely safe. Please do not send us up or down significant vertical distances in order to prioritize convenience for other modes (which may promote disuse of such paths, dangerous cut-throughs, or ADA claims).

(For example, the Homer Ave. undercrossing creates unsafe interactions between pedestrians and fast moving bikes, with little or no visibility – please design for safety. And when considering the alternatives, it is a huge plus if we can help our community members on foot and on bikes to get safely across Alma as well as the rail tracks. Let's please prioritize these alternatives.)

The Meadow-Charleston Underpass option seems least desirable for Ped/Bike/Stroller/Wheelchair and other Activate Transportation options, accordingly we strongly oppose this option.

For Churchill the Partial Underpass seems very poor for Ped/Bike/Stroller/Wheelchair users (long

detour, urine smells, safety concerns) while the Closure with Mitigations option seems sub-optimally designed for Bike/Ped interactions. We support Closure with Mitigations if you can improve the design of this undercrossing.

Other our main feedback is to:

Please Prioritize Lower Cost and Lower Maintenance options that can be successfully achieved in shorter periods of time. Let us recommend options that are realistically affordable based on our realistic, known revenue sources – not more dreams that have a significant risk of not being completed in a realistic timeframe and leaving these challenges fester.

For Meadow-Charleston, Hybrid is very affordable, and Viaduct is also relatively affordable; while most others have costs that appear far in excess of identified funds.

We understand that several neighbors have taken strong stands against elevating the railway even a modest amount, but I do not believe that foreclosing such options is helpful nor realistic. We note that the railway is already running much higher than grade level in south Menlo Park (probably 8'+ up, between El Palo Alto and Burgess Park, well hidden by trees, bothering no one – please take a look), at Homer Avenue (prob 6'+ above Alma, buffered by trees, bothering no one – please take a look), of course through San Carlos and Belmont, where they are very pleased with the result and it offers opportunities for additional at-grade ped/bike connections.

Electric trains without diesel exhaust and diesel engine noise will already be much more pleasant than current trains – and eliminating horns improves things further still. Trees along a berm obscuring quieter trains will be an amenity to the community, not a detraction. Let us consider a couple more spots for ped/bike undercrossings, budget for extensive tree screens, and seriously consider a cost-effective Hybrid option.

That's our comment. Again huge thanks for your efforts here. Let's please come to a consensus that is **affordable, achievable in a reasonable timeframe,** and **protects Active Transportation modes for generations to come.**

Neil Shea and family
800 High Street (x Homer Ave)
Palo Alto, CA 94301

From: [Kathy Jordan](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Fwd: Superintendent's Update - September 4, 2020
Date: Sunday, September 6, 2020 4:23:14 PM

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

To the XCAP Members:

Just wanted to direct your attention to a portion of the message PAUSD's Dr. Austin sent to parents as part of a Superintendent's update on Sept. 4th regarding the City's grade separation process and particularly Churchill Avenue:

CITY OF PALO ALTO RAIL GRADE SEPARATION FEEDBACK

The City has asked for PAUSD assistance to provide feedback on grade separation options for the rail system. Churchill and Charleston Avenues are major considerations, as is dispersing traffic into new patterns. The input timeline for this phase is closing soon. For those interested in impacts from possible options, please take a moment to visit the sites below.

- Link to the [Virtual Town Hall](#) - August 19 through September 7.
- [Virtual Town Hall Tutorial Video](#), which is a 10-minute video that can help to orient to this virtual environment.
- The [Connecting Palo Alto](#) website includes this info on the home page and the [Connecting Palo Alto calendar](#). The info is also on the [City calendar](#).

As the Superintendent of Schools, I sent the following letter to the Palo Alto City Council on February 20, 2020 to express concerns regarding a potential closure of Churchill Avenue:

The Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) has not taken an official position regarding proposed options to mitigate increased rail traffic. As the Superintendent of Schools, I want to provide some context about District use of Churchill Avenue (Churchill).

On any given day, Palo Alto High School (Paly) averages a little under 1,000 bicycles. The majority of bicycles enter from Churchill, although exact data is not easily obtainable. Clearly, student safety is the top concern of the District and a full closure of Churchill may negatively impact student safety related to bicycle commuters.

PAUSD deploys 22 busses each day to various parts of Palo Alto and East Palo Alto. Currently, our busses cross Alma Street at Churchill over 20 times per day as part of routine business. This does not include athletic or other extra-curricular trips. Our only entrance to our transportation yard is on Churchill. Practically speaking, a closure of Churchill would force every bus onto El Camino to make a right or left turn.

Our Maintenance and Operations fleet crosses Alma and Churchill approximately 175 times per day. This includes vans, trucks, and trailers. As described for our busses, the maintenance yard also depends upon a single entry/exit point on Churchill.

It is our understanding that proposals exist or may arise restricting large vehicle access to some mitigation options. PAUSD would contend that restrictions to large vehicles would negatively impact our busses and maintenance vehicles.

Finally, while traffic is the main focus of mitigation efforts, PAUSD would also like to raise the point that increased rail use negatively impacts the learning environment at Paly. Current rail use is already a major distraction for students in classes paralleling the rail line. The staff and students at Paly would benefit greatly by any mitigating efforts connected to sound barriers.

PAUSD is thankful for the efforts of our City leadership and the volunteers serving on the committee to propose solutions.

As you continue your deliberations, I hope you will factor in how inconvenient it will be for both PAUSD and the community not to be able to access Paly via Churchill from Alma.

Thank you.

Best,

Kathy Jordan

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

From: **Palo Alto Unified School District** <Palo_Alto_Schools@pausd.org>

Date: Fri, Sep 4, 2020 at 6:03 PM

Subject: Superintendent's Update - September 4, 2020

To: Palo Alto Unified Recipients <recipients@pausd.parentlink.net>



Superintendent's Update

BOARD AGENDA SEPTEMBER 8

The agenda for our Board of Education meeting on September 8 includes the following areas of special note:

Superintendent's Report – we will quickly touch on COVID19 topics:

- Kevin Gordon, Capitol Advisors – Founder and CEO of Capitol Advisors, Kevin Gordon, will provide legislative updates on many of the most relevant topics affecting schools in California. His presentation may include special education, funding, reopening guidelines, and upcoming legislation. As always, Mr. Gordon will be available to respond to questions and receive input for lobbying efforts.
- Budget Update – CBO, Carolyn Chow, will provide information about the status of the PAUSD budget, while also considering guidance about expectations for the future.
- Learning Continuity Plan (LCP) – The Board of Education will consider the LCP proposal for action at our September 22 meeting. We will conduct a brief presentation and take comments during a Public Hearing at the September 8 Board Meeting. The full plan is attached to our Board Agenda document.

NEW COLOR CODES REPLACE “WATCH LIST” FOR REOPENING OF SCHOOLS

The California Public Health Department guidelines have some new information, including a new color-coding system to replace “watch list” criteria. Currently, 4.8 million California students are prohibited from returning to in-person instruction due to their county status. EdSource produced a nice FAQ section that can be found [HERE](#).

As an example, Santa Clara County is in the most-restrictive category of “purple” at this moment. The ratings will be evaluated on September 8. If we move into the “red” category, the clock begins to determine if we can remain out of “purple” for fourteen days. Hypothetically, Santa Clara County schools could be allowed to open for large-scale in-person instruction as early as September 22. Each school district would determine their pace to return.

PAUSD has predetermined that large-scale in-person instruction would not commence prior to October 12. There is not a staff recommendation to change positions at this time. We will continue to monitor the list and will have public discussions before moving back to in-person models.

Specific provisions do allow the return of some special education and struggling students. The provision is not dependent upon the color rating. For these exceptions, no more than 25% of a school’s total population may be on campus. We are working through details on those exemptions to the order.

COVID19 TESTING CENTERS IN PALO ALTO

The City Manager shared an opportunity for residents and employees to participate in COVID-19 testing in Palo Alto on September 11 and 25. Appointments are requested and guarantee a test. Walk up participants may be seen as time permits. Anyone interested may click [HERE](#) for appointments.

CITY OF PALO ALTO RAIL GRADE SEPARATION FEEDBACK

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PAUSD is thankful for the efforts of our City leadership and the volunteers serving on the committee to propose solutions.

EQUITY AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

PAUSD+ LAUNCHES ON SEPTEMBER 8

The long-awaited opening of PAUSD+ Student Support Centers is here. Support Centers will open on Tuesday, September 8, at 8:30 a.m. with a soft launch for student registration, employee set-up and training, and dry run. Doors will open to students on Wednesday, September 9, from 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The program is designed to reduce the impact of school closures on our families during distance learning. PAUSD will make these no-cost Support Centers available to families with school-aged children in grades 6-12 who need a structured, quiet place to work.

Registration Information

Parents will receive a personal invitation to join PAUSD+ via text and are asked to indicate acceptance of the offer to register. In-Person Registration will be held ONLY for invitees on Friday, September 4, 1:00-3:00 p.m., and Tuesday, September 8, 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m., at 25 Churchill Ave.

Registration packets will include: Registration Form, COVID19 Waiver, Safety Protocols sheet, Self-Screening Sheet, and reminders of what to bring.

What to Expect

- A dedicated learning space to participate in their distance learning instruction
- Materials to assist in completion of assignments
- Students must bring their own laptop, Chromebook, or device, and power cord
- Center staff will assist with logging in to class meetings, looking up class assignments, reaching out to teachers, and remaining on task with frequent check ins
- Internet and printer access
- No more than 14 students will comprise a cohort
- Homework support
- Breakfast/Lunch

Student Schedule

* Students will miss some of the office hour time (3:10-3:40/T,W,TH) and will need encouragement to schedule a time with teachers before that time. Teachers should be notified to prioritize time for students in PAUSD+.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8:30- Doors Open	8:30- Doors Open	8:30- Doors Open	8:30- Doors Open	8:30- Doors Open
~9:30- Arrive for Breakfast (optional)	~8:30- Arrive for Breakfast (optional)	~9:10-Arrive for Breakfast(optional)	~8:30- Arrive for Breakfast (optional)	~8:30-Arrive for Breakfast (optional)
Arrive no later than 9:45 for COVID screening	Arrive no later than 8:45 for COVID screening	Arrive no later than 9:25 for COVID screening	Arrive no later than 8:45 for COVID	Arrive no later than 8:45 for COVID screening

10:00- Classes Start	9:00-Classes Start	9:40-Classes Start	screening 9:00-Classes Start	9:00-Classes Start
~12:35-Lunch	~11:40-Lunch	~11:40-Lunch	~11:40-Lunch	~11:40-Lunch
3:05-Classes End	3:05-Classes End	3:05-Classes End	3:05-Classes End	3:05-Classes End
3:30-Doors Close	3:30-Doors Close	3:30-Doors Close	3:30-Doors Close	3:30-Doors Close

Safety Protocols

- Cohorts will be limited to no more than 14 students, with no more than two supervising adults.
- Cohorts will not interact with other such groups, including interactions between staff assigned to different cohorts.
- Supervising adults will be assigned to one group and will work solely with that group.
- Physical distancing between children in the same cohort will be balanced with developmental and socio-emotional needs of the age group.
- Physical distancing between adults will be maintained to the greatest extent possible, and both adults and students must wear face coverings.
- Health screenings will be conducted daily.
- Students riding the bus must be screened by parents daily. Students may only ride the bus with a completed health screen.

DISMANTLING INEQUITY TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES

We recognize that schools play a critical role in advancing racial and social justice. To that end, administrators, teachers, and students are beginning to explore opportunities to understand and challenge bias, racism, and privilege in PAUSD schools and classrooms.

Examining the constructs that create inequity (e.g., bias, racism, anti-semitism, xenophobia) in our schools is something the District takes seriously. Anti-racist work, in particular, will require us to acknowledge that racist beliefs and structures are pervasive in our system, schools, and classroom - and then actively doing work to dismantle the systems that continue to perpetuate disparate outcomes for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).

We recognize that we must re-evaluate our curriculum and our instructional practices and address inequities and teach constructs such as bias, racism, and privilege.

Here is what PAUSD is working on to dismantle antiracist/anti-biased ideals:

Anti-Bias Curriculum: Using lessons developed by the [Anti-Defamation League \(ADL\)](#) and [The Social Justice Standards](#) established by [Teaching Tolerance](#) as a foundation, educators are exploring and/or implementing lessons that can shift the school culture. The themes of the lessons vary by level and include:

- [Anti-Bias Building Blocks \(Grades K-5\)](#)
- [Empowering Students, Challenging Bias \(Grades 6-8\)](#)
- [Confronting Bias, Working Toward Equity \(Grades 9-12\)](#)

Equity-Focused Capacity Building: Leaders across the District will engage in equity-focused professional learning to build capacity and share resources to take back to their school or department.

Site Team Development: Teachers at some schools are engaging in book studies, creating brave spaces for discussion, and developing site equity teams to tackle the barriers to equity in schools. While all schools and all educators are not at the same level of readiness, there is a tremendous amount of support for the work. Many schools opened with an equity-focused agenda for staff development day.

PAEA Partnership: The Office of Equity and Student Affairs will be partnering with the Palo Alto Education Association (PAEA) to support 4 PAEA areas of focus: Curriculum, Community Engagement, Hiring and Retention of BIPOC, and increasing diverse representation in PAEA. This will allow increased visibility for the work, partnership on events and training, and enhancement and sustainability of efforts to build an equitable system.

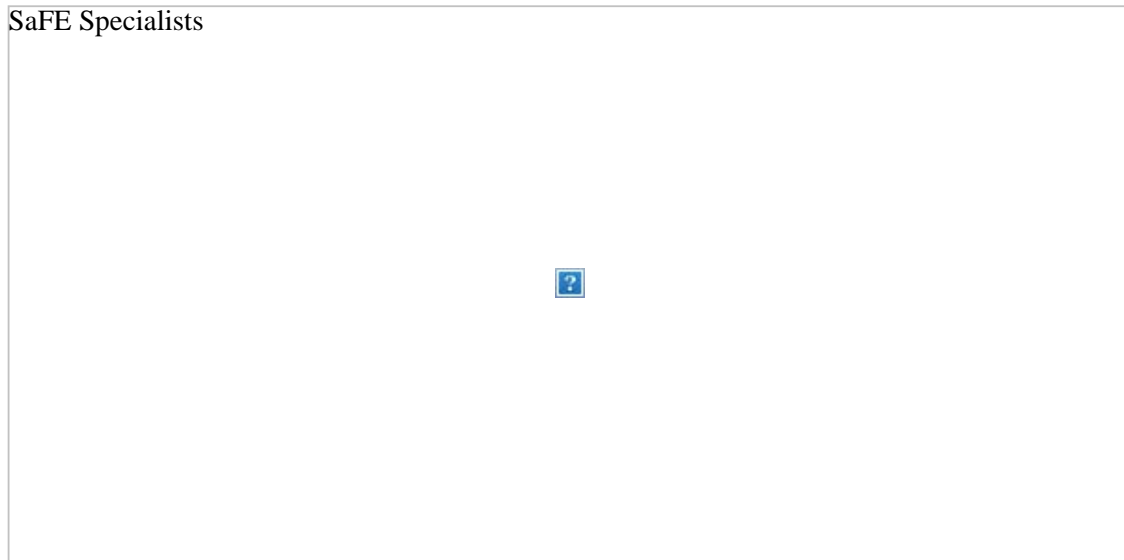
SUPERHEROES AMONG US

Student and Family Engagement (SaFE) Specialists have donned their superhero capes and are tackling some of the District's most pressing needs. You have heard of them, but might not know who they are:

The Student and Family Engagement Team spends each of their day calling, emailing, and visiting families to ensure they are connected and engaging with PAUSD schools. For many families, the voice of our staff on the phone calms them, assures them, and empowers them to keep moving forward and navigate this schooling process.

Our team consists of some of the most family-oriented individuals dedicating every day to ensuring whole-family success. Hobbies of this team include Zoom calls, frequent time on phone calls, long walks through school halls, and empowering student voices.

SaFE Specialists



Top Row: Miguel Fittoria, Coordinator (sites Duveneck, Paly, Greendell); Denise Li (Gunn, Ohlone); Juan Cruz (Gunn, Fletcher); Christian Muñoz (Barron Park, Palo Verde, Juana Briones, Escondido), Stacey Davidson (Hoover, El Carmelo)

Bottom Row: Christine Castillo (Nixon, Hoover, El Carmelo); Micaela Flores (Greene, Paly); Claudia Quiroga (Addison, Hays, Fairmeadow); Mele Tupou (Gunn, Paly); Ana Perez-Hood (Fletcher, JLS)

SPOTLIGHT ON A VETERAN AND A NEW EMPLOYEE

Ana Perez-Hood - Ana is starting her 16th year here in PAUSD, and spent several more years as a parent. With such a deep connection with this District as both parent and staff member, Ana approaches each interaction with a level of awareness and knowledge seemingly unrivaled. Each family that works with Ana is forever made stronger, and year after year, families shower Ana with flowers and gifts to show their appreciation!

Micaela Flores - Micaela is a student-turned-staff member. Who is better to help guide students towards success than someone who knows what the journey is like?! Micaela is able to connect with students with such ease, you'd think her students were her brothers and sisters! Micaela is always smiling, chatting with staff, and a friendly face for parents seeking help. As a lifetime community member in East Palo Alto, her experience helps her empathize with PAUSD students, encouraging them to

continue persevering.

LATINX PARENT ED SERIES

Starting the first week of school, the SaFE Team put on their first LatinX Parent Ed Series. Hosting this live event on Zoom at 7:00 p.m. on Thursdays, the SaFE Team worked with families on navigating the PAUSD website, understanding the use of Zoom, troubleshooting tech, submitting requests for help, and even on navigating Schoology and IC. Over 100 families joined the live event and stayed until 8:30 p.m.!

Our videos are made available to all students and families; however, they are in Spanish as we feel it is critical for families to participate in events that they can understand.

Visit the PAUSD Community Engagement Center website to learn more, and to connect with [local resources](#).

Our next Parent Ed event will be on Thursday, September 10, from 7:00-8:30 p.m. Any parent is welcome to join <https://pausd.zoom.us/j/94147483912>. (Reminder: this series is in Spanish!)

THE LIBRARY PROGRAM AT THE CORE OF THE EQUITY WORK

PAUSD teacher librarians strive to build a diverse collection and intentionally seek out materials by or about Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). Our greatest hope is that the critical roles of school librarians and the library program are centered in equity and will continue to drive student learning and teachers' teaching.

A Message from the Elementary Library Team:

"Happy September! In these "unprecedented times" (mid-March and beyond), the elementary teacher librarians have become an even stronger team. All twelve have collaborated on lesson design, read aloud recordings, and locating and promoting online reading resources to students, staff, and families. As librarians, we feel strongly about maintaining equitable access to our library collections, and currently, we are preparing to circulate physical library books and to unveil a brand new elementary ebook platform.

As teachers, we understand we have a new kind of students and a new kind of classroom. Our classes have gone from 20-24 students to 40, 60, even over 100 students at some sites. Along with our colleagues, we are learning the ins and outs of Schoology and tips and tricks for Zooming with students. Instead of the usual library routines and norms, we've begun the school year with lessons about community, being a good Zoomer, and how different coming back to school has been.

To Our School Community: This school year is surreal! We are here for you, so please reach out if we can help."

Elementary Library Team

Alphabetical by site – Top row: Patricia Ohanian, Addison; Rusty Tooley, Barron Park and PreK-12 Lead Teacher Librarian; Doree Tschudy, Duveneck; Yvette Ngo Vo, El Carmelo; Nina Bailey, Escondido; Michelle Brown, Fairmeadow. Bottom row: Kristin Howell, Hoover; Julie Griffin, Juana Briones; Laura Lajeunesse, Nixon; Grace Bunya, Ohlone; Amy Hansen, Palo Verde; Jen Ford, Walter Hays.

SPOTLIGHT ON FLETCHER LIBRARY PROGRAM

The Fletcher *Distance* Library is up and running! Library orientations have been provided to all 6th, 7th, and 8th grade classes through Tiger Camp and English classes; and we are already starting collaboration on research projects and teacher requests. Much assistance has been provided to staff members asking about the use of copyrighted works and how to use them with publisher permission.

Most exciting to announce is the start of Curbside Pick-up/Drop-off starting September 2! Just this past week, students have learned of the just-approved process for a contactless system modeled after that in place at the Palo Alto City Library. As of August 29, we already had 60 requests for books in a period of just a few days. Students are contacted once the books they placed on hold are ready for pick-up, and library staff will be waiting at the front of the school wearing masks and gloves, ready to provide books to eager readers. The Fletcher Library has snuck a little surprise in each book - a short story from the newly arrived Short Story Dispenser (from the Shortédition company in France)! The library received this fantastic machine after winning a PiE grant. The Palo Alto City Library contributed ongoing expenses for the grant, making it a true city library/school library collaboration.

The [Fletcher Virtual Library Google Slides](#) showcases the Curbside Pick-up/Drop-off information. Students whose families are unable to make it to Fletcher will be contacted by library staff offering to deliver the books with parent/guardian permission. Additionally, library staff will be delivering books provided by the office of the Assistant Superintendent of Equity and Student Affairs to students in need, working with our counselors and our Family Engagement Specialist to identify students.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE

Special Education is in the process of planning for the safe return of students with disabilities and those with “acute” needs as indicated by the August 25, 2020 guidelines from the California Department of Public Health office. We want to ensure that our planning meets all of the requirement delineated in the new guidelines. Please rest assured that our goal is always to keep students and staff safe.

We are happy to report that we will be able to open in person instruction for students who attend the post-secondary program on Thursday, September 10, as part of Phase 1. The program will be located at

Cubberley, a centralized location to meet the needs of our students. We are working diligently with our teachers and support staff to ensure that we have appropriate safety measures in place. An Open House is being scheduled for participating families on Wednesday, September 9, with a time to be determined after the publication of this report.

Elementary and secondary programs are working collaboratively to continue the plan for the phased return to in person instruction for students in the learning center, Futures, and Therapeutic programs. The department has been reaching out to families (phone, surveys, etc.) and staff to gather information that will be used in the reopening plan. More information will be provided as our plan is finalized.

LEARNING CONTINUITY AND ATTENDANCE PLAN

Governor Newsom's April 2020 [Executive Order N-56-20](#) triggered a revision of the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) and its budget for the 2020-21 school year. Subsequently, State legislation passed AB77 and trailer bill SB98 which replaced the LCAP with the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan (LCP) for this school year. Senate Bill 98 establishes the requirements of the LCP and is a key part of the overall budget package for schools, while providing information at the District level for how student learning continuity will be addressed during the COVID-19 crisis in the 2020-21 school year. According to the California Department of Education (CDE), the intention of the LCP is to "balance the needs of all stakeholders, including educators, parents, students and community members, while both streamlining engagement and condensing several pre-existing plans."

The template, released by the CDE on August 1, 2020, must be completed and approved by September 30, 2020. Two meetings are necessary: one for a Public Hearing and one for Board approval.

The Board of Education will hold a public hearing during the next regularly scheduled Board Meeting, September 8, 2020, to receive comments and recommendations from members of the public regarding the specific actions and expenditures proposed in the draft LCP.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ENGLISH LITERATURE SELECTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECONVENES

Members of the Middle School English Literature Selection Advisory Committee will be holding their first meeting of this school year on Wednesday, September 23. A part of PAUSD's ongoing curriculum evaluation and renewal cycle, the Advisory Committee convened last year and spent fall semester reviewing the literature that is currently taught in our middle schools. Members also began to read and vet new titles for possible inclusion in the curriculum for grade 6-8. Unfortunately, the work was interrupted by school closures in March. This year, the Committee will continue to examine new titles. Guided by Emily Style's, "Curriculum as Window and Mirror" (1988), members are seeking to diversify the reading list by looking for texts that simultaneously allow students "to look through window frames in order to see the realities of others, and into mirrors in order to see [their] own reality reflected." The Committee anticipates recommending two core literature texts, as required reading for each grade level (6-8), to the Board of Education in late spring of 2021. The Committee will also be recommending a menu of supplemental literature for optional use in each grade level.

LANGUAGE LINE (LL) SERVICES

Given that schools will be closed for in-person learning for an indeterminate amount of time, it is imperative that language access be delivered to any student and family who needs it. Currently, the District meets the legal requirements for translation services. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and rapidly changing conditions and guidelines have increased the need to provide on-demand interpretation and translation support that is quickly accessible to staff and families.

The District will use [Language Line Services](#) (LL) to provide phone interpretation services to facilitate communication with limited English speaking families and community members. Language Line provides interpretation for incoming calls, outgoing calls, or during an in-person meeting through a speakerphone. Via the LanguageLine app, teachers, students, and community members can access video

interpretation in 40 languages and audio-only interpretation in more than 240 languages, all within seconds at the touch of a button.

LL will allow us to move beyond compliance and afford teachers the opportunity to connect with students and families on demand, when they need it most. The service affords parents and the community the opportunity to communicate in their preferred language.

HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS

The Gunn and Paly Athletic Directors have been meeting to discuss the protocols needed to resume athletic conditioning for student athletes. Outdoor conditioning for student athletes will start on Monday, September 14, 2020. The athletic directors will send out more detailed information regarding the protocols next week.

THE ELEMENTARY FULL DISTANCE LEARNING (FDL) PROGRAM

What is the Full Distance Learning (FDL) Program? The FDL Program is a new and innovative full distance learning program, which provides an option for K-5 students, who have chosen not to return to school if/when hybrid learning becomes possible. Veteran teachers are supporting this program through their creative teaching styles and incorporation of technology. Families and students remain connected to their home school sites through PTA eNews and virtual events.

The FDL Program is off to a wonderful start! The first few weeks of school have focused on establishing a classroom community, building relationships, and cultivating a sense of belonging through interactive experiences. Teachers are setting class routines and norms and building a sense of belonging through various collaborative activities, such as pajama parties and Zoom games during class meetings, bedtime read alouds, while simultaneously guiding students through the use of virtual tools and platforms (i.e., Schoology and Zoom); all essential to support PAUSD curriculums during Reading and Writing Workshop, Bridges in Mathematics, *TCI: Social Studies Alive!*, and Science.

INNOVATION & AGILITY

Innovation and Agility-Curriculum & Career Education (CCE) is preparing the 2020-21 Request for Application for the California Career Technical Education Incentive Grant (CTEIG). The submission due date is September 17, 2020. The CTEIG is a State education, economic, and workforce development initiative, with the goal of providing K-12 pupils the knowledge and skills necessary to transition to employment and postsecondary education. Some of the major projects supported by the grant in the past include: upgrades to the JLStanford (JLS) Middle School Industrial Tech ventilation system; new devices for Video Media and Engineering programs at Fletcher and JLS; lighting and technology equipment for Paly Stage Tech program; purchase of industry grade tables for the Gunn Robotics program; and virtual reality/augmented reality (VR/AR) equipment for Design & Technology offerings at Greene.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS, SECONDARY UPDATE

Secondary students are using a variety of online curricula and supplements to support distance learning education this year. These programs have been vetted by teachers for effectiveness and meet student privacy standards. While some programs are brand new this year, others should be familiar to students from previous years. Distance learning has required some new access points for instructional aides, language tutors, and other staff. The goal is to provide students with as much targeted support as possible during distance learning.

Students are using *DreamBox* and *Desmos* in math classes, in addition to adopted curriculum, such as *Big Ideas Math (grades 6-8)*. Science classes will access the newly adopted *Amplify Science (grades 6-8)*. Middle school students will continue with the simulation tool supplement, *Gizmos*, and high school students will now have *Gizmos* accounts for all science courses. Targeted classes will start up with an additional virtual lab tool, *Pivot Interactives*.

Board-adopted social studies curricula include: TCI's *History Alive!* for grades 6-8, *Cengage's World*

History, 9 Edition for World History and Contemporary World History, and McGraw-Hill's *IMPACT: Principles of American Democracy*, for Government classes. PAUSD has recently purchased *Lexia*, a personalized, research-based literacy improvement program. Students in grades 6-8 and qualifying high school students will be using *Lexia's PowerUp Literacy* program as a supplement to their regular Language Arts classes.

INDUCTION: SUPPORTING NEW TEACHERS

The Palo Alto Unified Consortium Induction Program provides a two-year support system for teachers in their first steps as professional educators, leading to a recommendation for a Clear Teaching Credential. The overarching goal of the Induction Program is to prepare teachers to address the academic and social needs of all students, allowing each student to meet or exceed academic content standards. For the 2020-21 school year, the Induction Program will support 30 PAUSD teachers through weekly mentoring focused on goal setting, gathering student data, and reflecting on practice. Mentors are experienced PAUSD teachers who engage in ongoing professional learning to provide high quality support. Among the teachers in our program, 18 are new to the Induction Program this year, and 12 are continuing in their second year. All PAUSD mentors completed the Modern Pedagogy course over the summer, and are prepared to provide support in distance, hybrid, and face-to-face teaching models.

SUMMER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR TEACHERS

In preparation for the 2020-21 school year, over 800 teachers completed an online course entitled Modern Pedagogy for All Modalities. The course was designed and facilitated by PAUSD staff. The design team represented a partnership between Educational Services and Instructional Technology, and a team of teacher leaders provided feedback on the course design, facilitated cohorts of the course, and provided support for one another. Modern Pedagogy supported teachers in the development of skills for a variety of instructional delivery models: in-person, hybrid, and face-to-face, in response to changing health guidelines. The course covered several areas of teaching and learning, including equity and inclusive learning environments; educational technology; pedagogy for online and hybrid learning; and assessment. The course will remain open to teachers throughout the 2020-21 school year for reference, review, and deeper dives. A huge shout-out to our teachers for their commitment to students and their engagement in quality professional development over the summer!

Business Services

USDA EXTENDS FREE MEALS FOR KIDS THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2020

Summer meal programs can continue operating as funding allows. This announcement brings a huge relief to our school meal program and the community we serve. Families who might not qualify for free meals are still going through a tough time and are worried about how to keep food on the table. Now their children will have one less thing to worry about as they adjust to evolving in-school and remote learning scenarios.

“(Washington, DC, August 31, 2020) - Today, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will extend several flexibilities through as late as December 31, 2020, depending on Winter Breaks. The flexibilities allow summer meal program operators to continue serving free meals to all children into the fall months. This unprecedented move will help ensure - no matter what the situation is on-the-ground - children have access to nutritious food as the country recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. USDA has been and continues to be committed to using the Congressionally appropriated funding that has been made available.

"As our nation reopens and people return to work, it remains critical our children continue to receive safe, healthy, and nutritious food. During the COVID-19 pandemic, USDA has provided an unprecedented amount of flexibilities to help schools feed kids through the school meal programs, and today, we are also extending summer meal program flexibilities for as long as we can, legally and financially," said Secretary Perdue. "We appreciate the incredible efforts by our school foodservice professional's year in and year out, but this year we have an unprecedented situation. This extension of summer program authority will employ summer program sponsors to ensure meals are reaching all

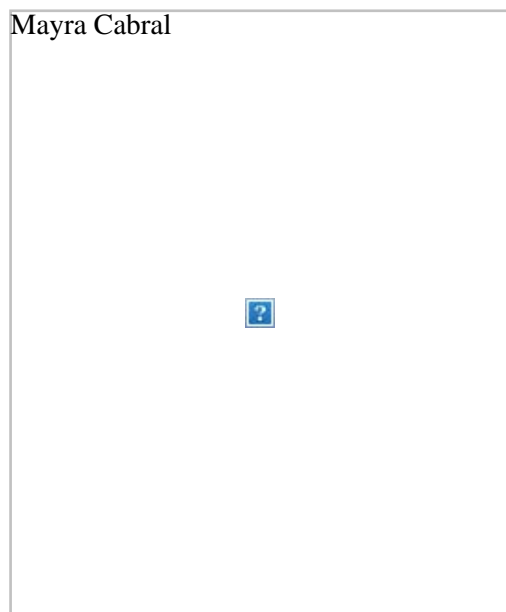
children - whether they are learning in the classroom or virtually - so they are fed and ready to learn, even in new and ever-changing learning environments."

"School Nutrition Association greatly appreciates USDA addressing the critical challenges shared by our members serving students on the frontlines these first weeks of school. These waivers will allow school nutrition professionals to focus on nourishing hungry children for success, rather than scrambling to process paperwork and verify eligibility in the midst of a pandemic." said School Nutrition Association (SNA) President Reggie Ross, SNS. "We look forward to continuing our dialogue with USDA to ensure school meal programs are equipped to meet the future needs of America's students.""

Human Resources

WELCOME TO THE PAUSD TEAM

We will be periodically featuring our new PAUSD staff who have joined us for the 2020-21 school year. This week, we'd like to introduce Mayra Cabral, Education Specialist at El Carmelo.



Mayra Cabral has joined the El Carmelo team as their new moderate to severe special education teacher. Originating from the Chicago suburbs, Mayra earned her Bachelor of science degree in Special Education with a learning behavior certification from the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana. This is Mayra's second year of teaching. Previously, she taught dual language resource and has experience with students and young adults from ages 5 to 25. Her passion for teaching includes finding multiple ways to encourage student development and providing unique methods of instruction where students can demonstrate their social and academic growth. Mayra is a fluent Spanish speaker who entered into education to help break down the stigma that some families may experience when coming across language barriers. She is very excited to share her dedication to education and advocacy for diverse learners.

From: [carlin otto](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel: Transportation](#)
Subject: Grade Separation Options
Date: Sunday, September 6, 2020 8:15:06 PM

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

Dear Grade Separation Teams for Palo Alto:

Whatever solution gets built, it will last at least 100 years (4 generations).
Let's choose the right solution !!!

A completely underground **tunnel** will give Palo Alto the following benefits:

1. The land above the tunnel can be reclaimed for use as parks, bike paths, dog-walks, tennis courts, etc.
2. There will be no divisive physical barrier down the middle of Palo Alto.
3. There will be no noise !!!!!
4. There will be no ugly visible train or train tracks with its surrounding wasteland of barren rock and trash.
5. Future high density housing, which will be built mostly adjacent to the current railroad path, will NOT have windows looking out onto ugly tracks or a high structure. The residents will not be woken up at night by trains rumbling past their windows.
6. Cross town traffic will be simple and safer and efficient.
7. The level of dust for the thousands of residents who live near the train will be significantly reduced from what it is today.

NO OTHER SOLUTION GIVES PALO ALTO THESE BENEFITS !!!!!!!!!!!

This is the right solution for Palo Alto, and the only one that I completely support. I am willing to pay significantly higher taxes (for example, a bond) in order to have this option.

It is unconscionable that the tunnel was removed from the list of options. The people who removed it are not even accountable to the residents via resident vote or citizen choice. I object to this process and I object to the removal of the tunnel option.

However, given that the current options do not include a tunnel

Speaking specifically to the reduced options offered for the Meadows-Charleston area, **the TRENCH is the only option that is acceptable to me.** All the other options: (1) are highly visible and ugly (the train would run above the 13-foot-high

roofs of this mostly single-story part of Palo Alto) and (2) would increase the number of residences that are polluted by noise and dust.

Please do NOT select any option that elevates the train above ground level.

The absolute worst option is the viaduct (elevated structure).

The second worst option is the hybrid (elevated berm).

These options are the ugliest, the dirtiest, the noisiest, the most visibly intrusive and divisive.

Carlin Otto
231 Whitclem Court
Palo Alto

From: [Deborah Ju](#)
To: [Jon Moeller](#)
Cc: [Transportation: Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Re: [cma_neighborhood] Charleston Railroad Crossing Grade Separation
Date: Sunday, September 6, 2020 2:22:16 PM

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

Dear Jon, I am not an expert but my understanding comes from living in a two story house. The train noise is louder upstairs than it is downstairs. The downstairs noise is blocked in part by other homes and fences. There is less to block the noise higher up. It is not my intention to mislead anyone or to speak as a noise expert, but this is my personal experience.

Sincerely,
Deborah Ju

Sent from my iPad

On Sep 6, 2020, at 2:11 PM, Jon Moeller <jsmoeller@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Deborah -

I appreciate your enthusiasm for an underground solution. I would prefer it too if it were technically feasible.

However, it's incorrect to say that raising the train on a viaduct or hybrid would increase noise. In fact it would reduce noise by 15-17dB compared to noise levels today.

This is roughly equivalent to the SPL difference between running a vacuum cleaner and watching TV quietly at night.

It's also important to note that a hybrid option would reduce traffic noise from Alma street considerably for those neighbors who live near the tracks.

It's fine to have an opinion on the visual aesthetic, but please don't spread misinformation about noise levels.

- Jon

On Sun, Sep 6, 2020 at 1:59 PM Deborah Ju <dsju371@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Transportation Department Staff and XCAP members.

My family has lived in the Charleston Meadows neighborhood for 35 years. It is a warm, close-knit and beautiful community. While we live closer to Wilkie Way than to Alma, train noise has been a constant annoyance that disturbs our peace and our sleep. I have reviewed the design options and urge you to **please choose an option that puts the train tracks below ground**. That is the only option that would keep the train noise level manageable for our neighborhood, and the only option that is not aesthetically horrible.

Please do **not** choose any option that raises the height the train travels on, as that would greatly increase the volume of train noise. Additionally, please consider the visual impact of the design. When I pass under concrete viaducts in other communities I always feel sorry for the people who live in the neighborhoods divided by such a structure and who have to look at the ugly monstrosity every day.

I am aware that the consultants eliminated the tunnel option for the Charleston crossing. In my opinion, they were intent on doing this all along, no matter what input they received. It seemed to me that the majority of residents in this area favored the tunnel option.

I strongly object to a process by whereby non-elected people eliminate the most popular option. The consultant is not accountable to the residents of Palo Alto, whereas the City government is. The trench option is far superior than the other remaining options, however the tunnel option is the best option and it should still be on the table.

I realize that the tunnel and trench may not be the cheapest options and perhaps not the easiest,

We are creating something that all of us will have to look at every single day. It is not an overstatement to say that it could be an eyesore forever into the future if it is not done well. Palo Alto has an international reputation as a City of engineers and innovators. Let's honor that tradition by picking the best design for the community and then finding a way to make it happen.

Sincerely,

Deborah Ju
[371 Whitclem Drive](#)
[Palo Alto](#)



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You received this message because you are subscribed to the "Charleston Meadows Neighborhood" Google group.

You received this message because you are subscribed to the Google Groups "Charleston Meadows Neighborhood" group.

To unsubscribe from this group and stop receiving emails from it, send an email to cma_neighborhood+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com.

To view this discussion on the web visit

https://groups.google.com/d/msgid/cma_neighborhood/CACAahYO9_1Yz7LoAU_uTfSKHMUSO7VdQtZxxqjPDQZ5SxCJbA%40mail.gmail.com.

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jon moeller

From: [Jon Moeller](#)
To: [Deborah Ju](#)
Cc: [Transportation; Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
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https://groups.google.com/d/msgid/cma_neighborhood/CACAahYO9_1Yz7LoAU_uTfSKHMUSO7VdQtZxxgqiPDQZ5SxCJbA%40mail.gmail.com.

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jon moeller

From: [Deborah Waxman](#)
To: [Transportation: Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: [Deborah Ju](#)
Subject: Re: [cma_neighborhood] Charleston Railroad Crossing Grade Separation
Date: Sunday, September 6, 2020 2:35:23 PM

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

Dear Transportation Department Staff and XCAP members,

I would like to echo the sentiments so well expressed by Deborah Ju. I live in the Charleston Meadows neighborhood and look across at the train running behind the homes across the street on Park Blvd. It was a great pleasure to enjoy the quiet during our initial shelter in place period, and I'm sorry to hear all the trains back on line. I can't imagine how intrusive and depressing the viaduct would be—there would be no escaping the noise and visual pollution. The lovely character of our neighborhood would be dominated by any elevation of the train track. If the tunnel cannot be constructed, a trench is the next best (least obtrusive) option. I strongly object to a choice that is based more on short-term efficiencies than on long-term value. Please consider making community impact your priority and put your efforts toward a positive outcome. We will have to live with this choice for generations.

Thank you for your consideration,

Deborah Waxman

4166 Park Blvd

Palo Alto

From: <cma_neighborhood@googlegroups.com> on behalf of Deborah Ju <dsju371@gmail.com>

Date: Sunday, September 6, 2020 at 1:59 PM

To: <transportation@cityofpaloalto.org>, <xcap@cityofpaloalto.org>

Subject: [cma_neighborhood] Charleston Railroad Crossing Grade Separation

Dear Transportation Department Staff and XCAP members.

My family has lived in the Charleston Meadows neighborhood for 35 years. It is a warm, close-knit and beautiful community. While we live closer to Wilkie Way than to Alma, train noise has been a constant annoyance that disturbs our peace and our sleep. I have reviewed the design options and urge you to **please choose an option that puts the train tracks below ground.** That is the only option that would keep the train noise level manageable for our neighborhood, and the only option that is not aesthetically horrible.

Please do **not** choose any option that raises the height the train travels on, as that would greatly increase the volume of train noise. Additionally, please consider the visual impact of the design. When I pass under concrete viaducts in other communities I always feel sorry for the people who live in the neighborhoods divided by such a structure and who have to look at the ugly monstrosity every day.

I am aware that the consultants eliminated the tunnel option for the Charleston crossing. In my opinion, they were intent on doing this all along, no matter what input they received. It seemed to me that the majority of residents in this area favored the tunnel option. I strongly object to a process by whereby non-

elected people eliminate the most popular option. The consultant is not accountable to the residents of Palo Alto, whereas the City government is. The trench option is far superior than the other remaining options, however the tunnel option is the best option and it should still be on the table.

I realize that the tunnel and trench may not be the cheapest options and perhaps not the easiest, We are creating something that all of us will have to look at every single day. It is not an overstatement to say that it could be an eyesore forever into the future if it is not done well. Palo Alto has an international reputation as a City of engineers and innovators. Let's honor that tradition by picking the best design for the community and then finding a way to make it happen.

Sincerely,

Deborah Ju
371 Whitclem Drive
Palo Alto



Virus-free. www.avg.com

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From: [Sandeep Bahl](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#); [Council, City](#); [Transportation](#)
Subject: Charleston Meadow Railroad Crossing Grade Separation
Date: Monday, September 7, 2020 8:25:41 PM

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

Dear Transportation Department Staff and Grade Separation teams for Palo Alto.

My family has lived in the Charleston Meadows neighborhood for 24 years. Our kids have grown up and have safely walked and biked to school. It is a beautiful neighborhood and we are writing to you because we would like to urge you to **please choose an option that puts the train tracks below ground**. It is the only option that would keep the train noise level manageable for our neighborhood, the only option that is not aesthetically horrible.

Your decision is very important to the city, since Palo Alto and its residents will live with the chosen design for at least 100 years. Please do not be pressured by short-term considerations - there is now more time since ridership will take a while to rebound. We need to choose the long-term solution that will have the LEAST negative impact on the residents who will live with it for the next 100 years, and also not divide the city. This means: the least noise, least pollution (for example, dust and visible trash), least danger, least impact on traffic, least ugliness, a safe school corridor, and a design that maintains South Palo Alto as a connected neighborhood.

The majority of our neighborhood favored the tunnel option, but somehow the consultants eliminated it as an option. It should be back on the table, since it was removed by non-elected people. It gives significant benefits that will be worth the cost: reclaimed land above for parks and bike paths, no divisive barrier, potential for future high density housing near the tracks, and a safer school corridor.

Both the tunnel and trench options need to be considered together. Projects to put train tracks below ground have been successful in many parts of the world, and even closer to home, e.g. in San Gabriel. Palo Alto has an international reputation as a City of engineers and innovators. Let's honor that tradition by picking the best design for the community and then finding a way to make it happen.

Sincerely,

Sandeep Bahl
297 Edlee Ave
Palo Alto

From: [Florence Keller](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel: Transportation](#)
Subject: Charleston/Meadow corridor
Date: Monday, September 7, 2020 8:02:40 PM

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

Aug 29, 2020

ELs and Berms are terrible ideas.

We should learn from NYC's third avenue EL. Elevated rail creates acoustical and visual blight, and destroys any sense of community. New York ended up tearing down their EL--Palo Alto would likely end up doing the same in due time.

South Palo Alto has consistently ended up with the short end of any stick--please, please give especial attention to those of us--the residents of South Palo Alto-- who will end up having to live, on a daily, hourly, basis with structures that, if history is a guide, would have quickly been rejected in the northern part of our town, if ever they had even been suggested.

Florence O. Keller
LaDoris H. Cordell

From: [David Kennedy](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Cc: citycouncil@cityofpaloalto.org
Subject: Churchill Avenue Railroad Crossing
Date: Monday, September 7, 2020 6:03:41 PM

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

I am very concerned about the XCAP split but prevailing vote on September 2, 2020 to recommend essentially closing the Churchill Ave RR crossing to vehicles and building a ped/bike only underpass, with the potential of adding another ped/bike underpass at Seale Ave/Peers Park.

This action ignores the objectives and provisions of the Transportation portion of the City's 2030 Comprehensive Plan which outlines a number of steps to enhance interconnectivity of the community for all modes of transportation. The Plan specifically urges keeping the Churchill Ave crossing open. If XCAP's recommendation is accepted by the City Council there will be a series of adverse and far-reaching impacts to the northern parts of Palo Alto, Southgate and quite likely to other parts of our City as well. With the scope and complexity of RR crossings it is quite likely that once implemented, this decision can not be changed after the terrible effects of closing a vital crossing such as Churchill Ave. become evident to the community and future users.

Unfortunately, as a late-coming but very interested observer to this process it appears to me that the XCAP has been faced with mostly "false choices", probably because of the criteria provided by the City Council some time ago and quite early in the process. It seems that these criteria imposed a number of constraints on the planning and evaluation of the RR crossing options. One such criteria that I have spoken to previously is "minimize property acquisition" which seems to have been applied by XCAP as "acquire no properties". This appears to have severely limited consideration along with early elimination of several worthy options. Now that the XCAP has extensively studied and discussed RR crossings it is in a position to go back to the Council with suggested revisions to the criteria so that better solutions to the grade separations can occur that will benefit the entire community. This could be made a part of the XCAP's October/November "final" report along with a recommendation to make a comprehensive assessment of what would be a fiscally responsible and community supportive program for the affected crossings. Because of COVID 19 and its effect on Caltrain, time may work in favor of such a review. Elimination of all at grade RR crossings within Palo Alto and along the entire Caltrain corridor should remain a worthy and sought after goal.

A few considerations that inform my concern re the Churchill Ave crossing:

1. Closing any existing RR crossings violates the 2030 Comprehensive Plan.
2. Input from the PAUSD has at best been minimal. It is unacceptable that the two major governmental entities affecting the quality of life in Palo Alto can not collaborate on the planning for RR crossings. This is particularly true for Churchill Ave. where there will be direct adverse access impacts on Palo Alto High School and the PAUSD administrative office if closure to vehicles occurs. Of particular importance should be that the District-wide school bus base is accessed from Churchill Ave. as well as the athletic facilities.

Attendee access to evening and night athletic events can be expected to be primarily by vehicle, most of which will be from east of the Alma/Caltrain corridor. I heard very little discussion of these considerations prior to the XCAP vote. Obviously, Paly is a major transportation objective.

3. There has been a fair amount of discussion re the findings of the traffic study. Common sense and local resident observations and experiences point to many more impacts than the traffic study forecast, mostly adverse, on surrounding streets as all the vehicle traffic that uses the Churchill crossing has to go to other streets, primarily Embarcadero and Oregon Expressway. The traffic consultant acknowledged that few models can accurately forecast human behaviors.
4. Redirecting more traffic to Embarcadero is very problematic. The existing underpass is functionally obsolete being too narrow with too little vertical clearance. The combination of available traffic lanes, signals between Emerson and El Camino, ped/bike/vehicle cross traffic, access between almost any direction of Alma and Embarcadero and current traffic on Embarcadero would result in gridlock during the busiest traffic periods. Further, the current ped/bike features of the Embarcadero underpass are dangerous.
5. More traffic using the Oregon Expressway is also problematic. It is already known as one of the worst traffic situations in northern Santa Clara County. For people trying to reach the California Ave. business area from the north part of Palo Alto they will have to attempt a SB Alma to WB Oregon turn within the underpass which is dangerous because of limited sight lines and heavy traffic within the underpass. It is likely that some people will decide it will be too much of a hassle and just decide to avoid the area, including the local businesses.
6. The citizen support for closing the Churchill crossing to vehicles seemed to be a relatively small number of Southgate residents plus a few other speakers. Based on informal Southgate survey information provided at XCAP meetings the neighborhood was split on this issue.
7. Closure of Churchill will eliminate an access option for emergency vehicles. In my opinion, the response from the PAPD and the PAFD were rather perfunctory. I understand police and fire operations are different however it seems emergency vehicles should have optional routings depending on conditions at the moment. I have personally seen emergency vehicles recently use Churchill Ave.
8. There were a number of comments by XCAP members at various times about "equity". This seemed to include a number of different areas of "equity" and often equity is in the eyes of the beholder. A few examples:

Ped/bike vs vehicle equity - most recent and nearer term potential transportation capital projects have been to benefit ped/bikes - Homer St underpass, 101/Adobe Creek overpass, rebuild the California Ave ped/bike underpass, add an underpass at Seale Ave/Peers Park, and based on the XCAP vote, a ped/bike only underpass at Churchill.

Homes affected by changing traffic patterns resulting from the Churchill closing - less traffic for 14 homes along Churchill between Caltrain tracks and El Camino, more traffic for 20 homes on Lincoln and Emerson because of the "loop" traffic option for NB Alma to WB Embarcadero for those vehicles trying to get to Paly, Town and Country, Stanford, El Camino, etc. from Northbound Alma. (This "loop" will also adversely affect peds and bikes at the Emerson/Kingsley/Embarcadero intersection.)

South Palo Alto will be gaining two separated RR crossings for peds/bikes/vehicles - north Palo Alto will lose a RR crossing for vehicles.

I strongly request that XCAP reconsider its decision to effectively recommend closure of the Churchill Ave. at grade crossing, to be replaced with only a ped/bike undercrossing. I further urge XCAP to request the City Council review and revise its criteria, including a willingness to acquire a small number of properties, if needed. This would allow consideration of several other options, possibly at all three crossings being studied, that would be more functional and intuitive with better aesthetics and acceptable costs. If I can assist the XCAP further (other than through two minute sound bites) please advise me. Thank you.

David Kennedy (a long time Professorville area resident and longer time Palo Alto resident)

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From: [A Hempstead](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#); [Transportation](#); [Council, City](#)
Subject: Fwd: [cma_neighborhood] Grade Separation Options
Date: Monday, September 7, 2020 8:28:45 PM

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

Dear Transportation Department Staff and XCAP members,

Please choose ONLY an option that puts the tracks below ground.

Copying petition excerpt below:

Petition: We strongly feel that the Palo Alto City Council consider the following points:

- We adamantly oppose EMINENT DOMAIN and seek to minimize property losses for our neighbors.
- We oppose road OVERPASS options for the Charleston/Meadow crossings in all circumstances.
- We oppose RAISED RAIL OPTIONS such as those involving berms or viaducts.
- We support LOWERED RAIL OPTIONS such as those involving a tunnel or trench.
- We support INCREASED SAFETY for all residents of our community, and especially for students, cyclists, and pedestrians.

Our dear neighbors have been in communication with you, so I won't repeat our concerns in detail. But I ask you all to consider how you would feel if you were a Palo Alto citizen with deep roots in the community living near the tracks, as many of our neighbors do. Consider those who will lose their homes, those who will have to endure the noise and the surrounding ugly scar, and the difficulties leading to more congested traffic, and other possible degradation to our neighbors' sense of peace, and sense of community.

We live in a town of increasingly concentrated wealth and privilege. Those less than the extremely wealthy already have diminished influence re the quality of our community. We in Palo Alto evidently are supposed to pride ourselves on our city's kindness and consideration for all. Will you choose to pursue options which are noxious and harmful to so many families, many of whom who will lose their neighborhood? Or can you find the kindness & sense of ethics & responsibility within yourselves to do the right thing and renew planning for the underground options?

Sincerely,
Anna Hempstead
344 Whitelem Drive
Palo Alto

From: [Anu Kumar](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Grade separation options
Date: Monday, September 7, 2020 6:59:42 PM

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

Hello,

Given the options we have currently, the only option is that works decently for all of us in TRENCH. Not sure why the Tunnel option was removed in the first place. No other option works for us. Please consider citizens voice who are living in the neighborhood as this is something that is going to provide a long term impact the quality of life for all of us who are living here.

Thanks so much,
Anu Kumar
4133 Park Blvd
Palo Alto, CA 94306

From: [KHUSHROO GANDHI](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#); [Transportation](#); [Council, City](#)
Subject: Grade Separation Options
Date: Monday, September 7, 2020 9:44:45 PM

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

Hi,

I wanted to voice my opinion on Grade Separation. More than 2 years ago, we filed a petition with the City signed by about 600 people with the following points:

Petition: We strongly feel that the Palo Alto City Council consider the following points:

- We adamantly oppose EMINENT DOMAIN and seek to minimize property losses for our neighbors.
- We oppose road OVERPASS options for the Charleston/Meadow crossings in all circumstances.
- We oppose RAISED RAIL OPTIONS such as those involving berms or viaducts.
- We support LOWERED RAIL OPTIONS such as those involving a tunnel or trench.
- We support INCREASED SAFETY for all residents of our community, and especially for students, cyclists, and pedestrians.

You can also find it here <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1klcrioBxfiCyueO2F-ECz-TlfpJH-ihe/view?usp=sharing>

It looks like two years have passed with no real decisions being made and we are back to square one and the input which was given 2 years ago has been discarded. Hence I would like to express my opinion again here: The Lowered rail option (The Trench Option) is the best option for the neighborhood.

Doing a comparable cost analysis for a trench built in Southern California please refer to this link (and the except taken from that link)

<https://www.theaceproject.org/san-gabriel-trench-grade-separation>

Note the length/width/duration and the cost. I have copied some of the information here so you do not have to drill to the url.

City of San Gabriel

Project Description

The 2.2-mile San Gabriel Trench grade separation project resulted in the lowering of a 1.4-mile section of Union Pacific railroad track in a 30-foot-deep, 65-foot wide trench through the City of San Gabriel with bridges constructed at Ramona Street, Mission Road, Del Mar Avenue and San Gabriel Boulevard, allowing vehicles and pedestrians to pass over the tracks.

Project Impacts

The project reduces emissions and improves safety by eliminating an estimated 1,744 vehicle-hours of delay for nearly 90,000 motorists traveling each day on the four grade-separated streets. Ten collisions had been recorded at the four crossings including two fatalities and three injuries over a 10-year period. By 2025, rail traffic is projected to increase from 18 trains per day to 61 trains per day if a second track is installed. In addition to eliminating locomotive horn and crossing bell noise, the project allows emergency responders to respond more quickly to calls on both sides of the tracks. The project directly employed 1,211 workers, including 133 San Gabriel Valley residents.

Project Status

Major construction activities began in Spring 2014, following an extensive archaeological excavation across the street from the historic San Gabriel Mission adjacent to the railroad tracks. Construction is complete on the 1.4-mile concrete-walled railroad trench and on the roadway bridges at Ramona Street, Mission Road, Del Mar Avenue and San Gabriel Boulevard. Final project completion was in September 2018. The cost of the project was \$293.7 million.

Thank you for your consideration

Best regards,
Khushroo Gandhi
W. Meadow Drive

From: [Wei Xiao](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#); [Transportation](#); [Council, City](#)
Subject: Grade Separation
Date: Monday, September 7, 2020 9:58:52 PM

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To whom it might concern,

My name is Wei Xiao and I live at 325 Victoria Pl, Palo Alto.
Please help all the PA residents bring back the right solution - the underground tunnel! If we have to look at the reduced options, particularly for the Meadows-Charleston area, the **TRENCH would be the only reasonable solution**. All other solutions just make the neighborhood less livable and creates separation. Would appreciate if you can hear from all of us.

Thanks,
Wei Xiao

From: [Sang-Min Lee](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#); [Transportation](#); [Council, City](#); [Sang-Min Lee](#)
Subject: I am for the tunnel option (Charleston & Alma)
Date: Monday, September 7, 2020 8:17:48 PM

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

To who it may concern:

My first priority is the tunnel option and the second priority is trench only if the tunnel option is impossible.

I am strongly against any other options, which will impact the city very negatively years to come.

We are talking about a project, which will influence the city several generations. A near sighted decision based only on money will hurt the city and the citizen tremendously.

Again, please choose the tunnel option.

Regards,

Sang-Min Lee
302 Whitclem Dr.
Palo Alto CA 94306

From: [Patrice Banal](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel; Transportation](#)
Subject: Palo Alto Grade Separations
Date: Monday, September 7, 2020 10:02:17 PM

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

Dear Grade Separation Teams for Palo Alto:

The Charleston-Meadow Underpass option is a lose-lose-lose proposition.

- Residents targeted for Eminent Domain forced Acquisitions will lose their homes, communities, investment.
- Neighbors adjacent to the proposed traffic circles/ underpass lose property value, quality of life
- Palo Alto loses its integrity and ethics by using Eminent Domain when there are better options.
- Palo Alto also loses more housing at a time when our city is under pressure to create housing- eminent domain is going backward in so many ways!

I am writing to urge you to look at solutions that do **NOT** utilize Eminent Domain for Grade Separation Solutions

When meetings began -so many years ago- residents were very clear that **a priority for us was avoiding property acquisitions.**

The city was provided with a petition signed by over 600 residents declaring our opposition to any solution that involved Eminent Domain.

This is Palo Alto-a community that holds tolerance, activism, and inclusion, as some of our core values.

Having civic-minded neighbors with shared values is one of the primary reasons many of us chose to live in, purchase, and invest in this city and community.

Any grade separation solution (?) that includes taking residents' properties is **NOT** a SOLUTION or option.

- Making Charleston into Embarcadero South will impact ALL properties on Charleston from ALMA to Mumford-directly-acquisitions and/or "sliver takes"
- and financially -with a decrease to surrounding property values-nobody wants to live on a freeway artery.
- Residence who attempt to sell during construction will be forced to drop their prices as potential buyers will rightfully demand a price reduction

Should the city council opt for the Underpass:

Residents on Charleston and Meadow face AT MINIMUM FOUR YEARS of:

- lost access to their street, driveways-making us feel like prisoners on our own block
- inability to access/cross Alma-huge traffic disruptions-this will impact students, workers, families, emergency service, commercial services that use Charleston as a conduit to the freeway
- decimated quality of life due to constant noise, construction traffic and pollution that come with living at ground zero of a construction site.

Please do NOT recommend the Charleston/ Meadows underpass as a solution-it is not a solution and should not be an option.

Patrice Banal
272 E Charleston Rd
Palo Alto

From: [Florence Keller](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#); [Transportation](#); [Council](#); [City](#)
Subject: Re: Charleston/Meadow corridor
Date: Monday, September 7, 2020 8:04:45 PM

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

On 9/7/20 8:01 PM, Florence Keller wrote:

Aug 29, 2020

ELs and Berms are terrible ideas.

We should learn from NYC's third avenue EL. Elevated rail creates acoustical and visual blight, and destroys any sense of community. New York ended up tearing down their EL--Palo Alto would likely end up doing the same in due time.

South Palo Alto has consistently ended up with the short end of any stick--please, please give especial attention to those of us--the residents of South Palo Alto-- who will end up having to live, on a daily, hourly, basis with structures that, if history is a guide, would have quickly been rejected in the northern part of our town, if ever they had even been suggested.

Florence O. Keller
LaDoris H. Cordell

From: [David Ephron](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#); [Transportation](#); [Council, City](#)
Subject: South Palo Alto rail options
Date: Monday, September 7, 2020 8:27:30 PM

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

I want to strongly reiterate my support for options that lower the tracks and strong opposition to any options that raise the tracks.

I feel like the process of getting public input over the past few years is designed to tire everyone out and allow the board to point to low turnout at the end and justify any decision.

The fundamentals of the different options haven't changed very much so I urge you to look not only at the number of responses in the most recent round of public input, but also to consider all the petitions opposing raising the tracks and all the comments against raising the tracks going back to the very beginning of the public discussion.

It's not reasonable to expect everyone who cares to attend every meeting and submit petitions and letters at every stage of a long drawn out process.

Everyone I know opposes raising the tracks. Lower the tracks. Or do nothing.

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Kapil Chhabra](#)
To: [Council, City; Transportation; Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Train options
Date: Monday, September 7, 2020 8:34:36 PM

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

I am a resident of W Meadow Dr, Palo Alto. My family and *our generations* to come will be directly impacted by the choice *you* make for the grade separation.

The selection requires exemplary leadership as it is a choice between short-term resources vs. long-term impact. This has never been an easy choice but has always been a defining one.

I **strongly** recommend the tunnel option for Palo Alto. Though I urge you to put the option back on the table, I understand the current inclination to choose between the available options.

The only compromise that should even be considered is the trench option that buries the train underground.

Best regards,
Kapil

From: [Gary Lindgren](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#); [Kamhi, Philip](#)
Subject: Box Jacking
Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 3:58:26 PM
Attachments: [box_jack_method_6_15_2020.pdf](#)

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

Hello XCAP Committee,

I watched the video shown on September 3rd last week that answered questions gathered from the Virtual Town Hall. Peter answered a question regarding the use of Box Jacking. I don't think he explained it that well. He mentioned that an U shaped concrete unit would be built. Actually most of the time a complete box is built with a bottom, sides and top. This would all be design with California earthquake standards in mind. I had put together a slide show that better explains the process, see attached.

Take Care,
Gary

Gary Lindgren
585 Lincoln Ave
Palo Alto CA 94301

650-326-0655

[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

BOX JACKING METHOD

A faster way to build an underpass below
railroad tracks



- ▶ Box jacking is a construction process where a concrete box is either assembled or constructed on-site and then pushed under the rail tracks or road above.
- ▶ The concrete box becomes the new underpass.
- ▶ A powerful array of hydraulic cylinders slowly push the box ahead.
- ▶ The cylinders can only push about one foot at a time and then the cylinders are retracted and new spacers are put in back of the cylinders and then the cylinders push again, just one step at a time.

WHAT IS THE BOX JACKING METHOD

- ▶ The Jack Box method eliminates the need for the shoofly temporary tracks which allow full service during construction.
- ▶ The train tracks have full service even as the box is being pushed under the tracks.

WHY USE JACK BOXING METHOD

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, set against a blue background.

- ▶ The first step is to prepare area for dewatering.
- ▶ On the west side the tracks for Churchill, Meadow and Charleston closely spaced holes will be drilled and then filled with concrete reinforced with rebar.
- ▶ The holes must be deep enough for the concrete piers to hold back the soil when dirt is removed 20 feet below.
- ▶ The purpose is to prepare a working space to build the box.
- ▶ Excess water is then pumped out.

STEP BY STEP (1)

- ▶ Once the dewatering is complete, then the next step is to lay down a concrete pad.
- ▶ The pad is first the work site to construct the concrete box.
- ▶ Second it becomes the launching pad for pushing the box forward.
- ▶ The rear part of the pad must be reinforced as the pressure cylinders will push against this back area and push the box forward.

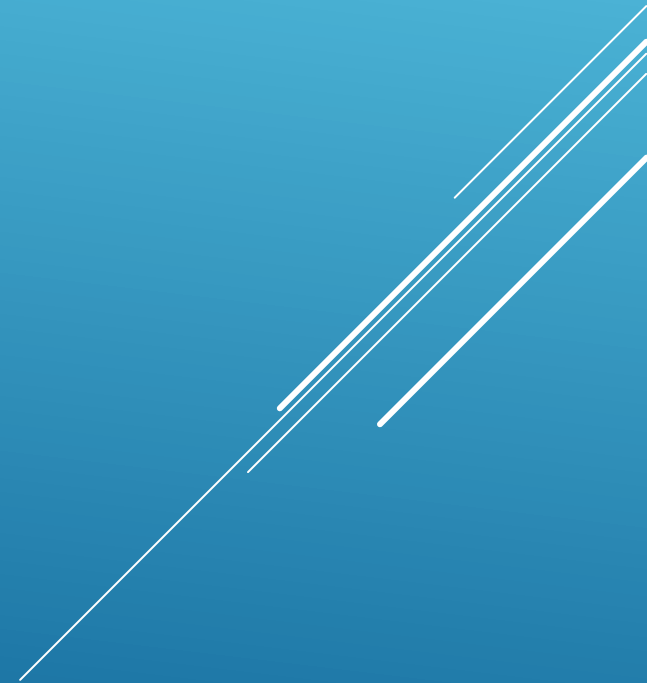
STEP BY STEP (2)

- ▶ The next step is to build the concrete box that becomes the flat part of the underpass going under the tracks and Alma.
- ▶ This box must be designed and built to carry the load for the tracks and for the road Alma and to carry 2 lanes of traffic and a path for bikes and pedestrians in the underpass.
- ▶ This construction will take several weeks to complete.

STEP BY STEP (3)

- ▶ The jacking process can start by pushing the box ahead a few feet.
- ▶ As it gets close to the tracks, the concrete piers that were installed for the dewatering and next to the tracks must now be removed in order to unblock the path.
- ▶ When the box reaches the track ballast, work now is to stabilize the tracks and make sure that they are not moved in any way as the box moves under the tracks.

STEP BY STEP (4)



- ▶ To stabilize the tracks, long I-beams are placed on top of the box and then at several spots along the length of the track span, the ballast is removed and the I-beams are pushed under the tracks and blocking used secure the downward pressure of the rails and load above.
- ▶ The ballast removed is put back and tamped in place.
- ▶ Remember at this point all the earth and ballast is still in place to receive the full load of the rail traffic.
- ▶ The process of pushing the I-beams in place is done at night during off traffic hours.

STEP BY STEP (5)



- ▶ A steel girder is laid across the steel I-beams in order to prevent the box pushing from moving the rail tracks.
- ▶ Notice the rail cars going by, this is an active railroad.
- ▶ The steel girder is anchored at each end by a concrete pier. In our case this could be one of the piers installed for the dewatering and was left exposed by a couple feet.



STEP BY STEP (6)

- ▶ Steel I-beams are laid next to the rails and on top of the I-beams underneath the rails.
- ▶ These I-beams on top of the rail bed form a temporary bridge.
- ▶ The picture on the right shows that the box has now been pushed through to the other side.



STEP BY STEP (7)

- ▶ Notice that the I-beams parallel to the tracks rest on the I-beams under the tracks.
- ▶ Between each rail tie is a steel box beam that slides into slots of the I-beam next to the rails.
- ▶ The steel box beams fasten to the rails much like rails are fasten to the rail tie.
- ▶ Heavy duty chains connect the steel girder to the I-beam parallel to the rails to keep the rails from moving.



STEP BY STEP (8)

- ▶ As the box is pushed forward, dirt and soil is removed to the rear area and removed.
- ▶ The hydraulic cylinders are shown in the picture, notice the shiny cylinders in the lower middle area.




STEP BY STEP (9)

- ▶ Once the box has passed under the tracks, then the area is opened up and soil is removed from the top also.
- ▶ At this point Alma would be closed down for a long weekend.
- ▶ Soil would be removed as the box is pushed forward.
- ▶ When the box is in the final position, then Alma can be paved over the box area and traffic can resume.
- ▶ The next step is to complete the approaches to the underpass.

STEP BY STEP (10)

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, set against a blue background.

- ▶ The Petrucco Company developed the box jacking process in 1978 and has completed 1500 projects.
 - ▶ Last summer the Petrucco process was used in the United States for the first time for the Long Island Railroad. It is part of 6 underpasses to be completed.
 - ▶ Several projects are in the process in North America.
- 

From: [James Wilkinson](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel; Transportation](#)
Cc: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Caltrain Grade Separation
Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 1:44:11 AM

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

Regarding the options presented at the virtual town hall for the Charleston/E. Meadow corridor:

1. The tunnel option, which has been removed, provided the best long term solution. I think if this were put out to bid as a design-build the cost would actually be well under the consulting engineer's estimate, and provide the community numerous benefits. This is one case where putting a bond to a vote would both serve as a referendum on the issue, while simultaneously providing clarity on our ability to fund our share of this option.
2. Trench solutions are the best remaining from those options listed. In a city where we have expended considerable time, money and effort undergrounding utilities and creating street furniture for aesthetic purposes, surely we can do better than viaducts and any other elevated option placed before us.
3. Closing the crossing at E. Meadow to vehicular traffic and focusing efforts on accommodating cyclist and pedestrian crossing safely and efficiently while leaving Caltrain at grade has to be considered before any options to elevate at either Charleston or E. Meadow if finances are the deciding factor.

Thank you for your consideration.

James Wilkinson
42 Roosevelt Cir

From: [Chris Jackson](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Charleston Railroad Crossing Grade Separation
Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 9:00:11 PM

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

From: Chris Jackson
Date: September 8, 2020
To: transportation@cityofpaloalto.org, xcap@cityofpaloalto.org
Subject: [cma_neighborhood] Charleston Railroad Crossing Grade Separation

Dear Transportation Department Staff and XCAP members.

My family has lived in the Charleston Meadows neighborhood for the past 30 years. I am also a retired Fire Captain for the City of Palo Alto. I have seen the tragic effects of Cal Train running through are city's residential area. I have personally witnessed a suicide at the Charleston Crossing and responded to the countless fatalities over the years as a firefighter/Paramedic along the corridor. A high-speed rail has no place in the middle of City Palo Alto or any other city in Santa Clara County.

The Charleston Meadow community is a warm, close-knit community. My family lives close to the trains noise and has been a constant annoyance that disturbs if our peace and our sleep. I have reviewed the design options and urge you to **please choose an option that puts the train tracks below ground**. That is the only option that would keep the train noise level manageable for our neighborhood.

Please do **not** choose any option that raises the height the train travels on, as that would greatly increase the volume of train noise. Additionally, please consider the visual impact of the design.

I am aware that the consultants eliminated the tunnel option for the Charleston crossing. In my opinion, they were intent on doing this all along, no matter what input they received. It seemed to me that the majority of residents in this area favored the tunnel option. I strongly object to a process by whereby non-elected people eliminate the most popular option. The consultant is not accountable to the residents of Palo Alto, whereas the City government is. The trench option is far superior than the other remaining options, however the tunnel option is the best option and it should still be on the table.

I realize that the tunnel and trench may not be the cheapest options and perhaps not the easiest, we are creating something that all of us will have to look at every single day. It is not an overstatement to say that it could be an eyesore forever into the future if it is not done well. Palo Alto has an international reputation as a City of engineers and innovators. Let's honor that tradition by picking the best design for the community and then finding a way to make it happen. We also need to have a

business tax to have the
end users pay for this project.

Sincerely,

Chris Jackson
275 Whitclem Way
Palo Alto, CA 94306

From: [Hing Sham](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Charleston/Meadow rail input
Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 4:37:59 PM

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

Our preference is the Underpass.

Sent from Hing's iPad

From: [Gary Lindgren](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Churchill Crossing
Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 11:26:32 AM

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

Hello XCAP Committee,

I support the closing of Churchill with mitigations. My original idea was to widen Churchill from Emerson to Alma and have a clean underpass much like that of the Charleston underpass. But I don't see that the Council would ever approve making Churchill wider and that would require acquisition of property on that block. I think the improvements of the Embarcadero underpass should be discussed more. I think any changes to the underpass should look at redoing the whole thing and make it 2 lanes each way both above and below. Lets do it right now at last.

Take Care,

Gary

Gary Lindgren
585 Lincoln Ave
Palo Alto CA 94301

650-326-0655

[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: [ROBIN JACKSON](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Dear Transportation Department Staff and XCAP members.
Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 8:46:39 PM

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

Dear Transportation Department Staff and XCAP members.

Our family has lived in the Charleston Meadows neighborhood for 30 years. It is a quiet and friendly neighborhood, in which people take nightly walks with their family and pets. The train noise is already loud and disturbing; throughout the day and night. This loud distracting noise would intensify, if it were to be above ground.

I have reviewed the design options and urge you to **please choose an option that puts the train tracks below ground.** That is the only option that would keep the train noise level manageable for our neighborhood, and the only option that is not aesthetically displeasing.

I adamantly oppose EMINENT DOMAIN and seek to minimize property losses for our neighbors.
I oppose road OVERPASS options for the Charleston/Meadow crossings in all circumstances.

I support LOWERED RAIL OPTIONS such as those involving a **tunnel or trench.**
I support INCREASED SAFETY for all residents of our community, and especially for students, cyclists, and pedestrians.

A tunnel is the best option; a trench is tolerable.

An elevated train track structure with walls and overpasses or underpasses to complete grade separation will create multiple complex problems in our neighborhoods up and down the peninsula. This will change the look and feel of our friendly tree lined neighborhoods, and will deteriorate the values of the homes, all along the railway.

Sincerely,

Robin Jackson
275 Whitclem Way
Palo Alto

From: [ROBIN JACKSON](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Dear Transportation Department Staff and XCAP members.
Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 8:51:56 PM

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

Dear Transportation Department Staff and XCAP members.

Our family has lived in the Charleston Meadows neighborhood for 30 years. It is a quiet and friendly neighborhood, in which people take nightly walks with their family and pets. The train noise is already loud and disturbing; throughout the day and night. This loud distracting noise would intensify, if it were to be above ground.

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Sincerely,

Robin Jackson
275 Whitley Way
Palo Alto

From: [Ivy Li](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#); [Transportation](#); [Council, City](#)
Subject: Fw: Grade Separation Options.-Tunnel. Tunnel. Tunnel is the only one should consider!!!
Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 9:14:23 PM

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

From: Ivy Li
Sent: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 9:11 PM
To: xcap@cityofpaloalto.org <xcap@cityofpaloalto.org>; transportation@cityofpaloalto.org <transportation@cityofpaloalto.org>
Subject: Grade Separation Options.-Tunnel. Tunnel. Tunnel is the only one should consider!!!

Dear Grade Separation Teams for Palo Alto:

I am Ivy the neighbor of Carlin. I totally agree with Carlin's email below. Please consider your Descendants. and lets them to remember you by this project in good way.

Whatever solution gets built, it will last at least 100 years (4 generations).
Let's choose the right solution !!!

A completely underground **tunnel** will give Palo Alto the following benefits:

1. The land above the tunnel can be reclaimed for use as parks, bike paths, dog-walks, tennis courts, etc.
2. There will be no divisive physical barrier down the middle of Palo Alto.
3. There will be no noise !!!!!
4. There will be no ugly visible train or train tracks with its surrounding wasteland of barren rock and trash.
5. Future high density housing, which will be built mostly adjacent to the current railroad path, will NOT have windows looking out onto ugly tracks or a high structure. The residents will not be woken up at night by trains rumbling past their windows.
6. Cross town traffic will be simple and safer and efficient.
7. The level of dust for the thousands of residents who live near the train will be significantly reduced from what it is today.

NO OTHER SOLUTION GIVES PALO ALTO THESE BENEFITS !!!!!!!!!!!

This is the right solution for Palo Alto, and the only one that I completely support. I am willing to pay significantly higher taxes (for example, a bond) in order to have this option.

It is unconscionable that the tunnel was removed from the list of options. The people who removed it are not even accountable to the residents via resident vote or citizen choice. I object to this process and I object to the removal of the tunnel option.

However, given that the current options do not include a tunnel

Speaking specifically to the reduced options offered for the Meadows-Charleston area, **the TRENCH is the only option that is acceptable to me.** All the other options: (1) are highly visible and ugly (the train would run above the 13-foot-high roofs of this mostly single-story part of Palo Alto) and (2) would increase the number of residences that are polluted by noise and dust.

Please do NOT select any option that elevates the train above ground level. The absolute worst option is the viaduct (elevated structure). The second worst option is the hybrid (elevated berm). These options are the ugliest, the dirtiest, the noisiest, the most visibly intrusive and divisive.

Carlin Otto
231 Whitclem Court
Palo Alto

To: <xcap@cityofpaloalto.org>, <transportation@cityofpaloalto.org>

Dear Grade Separation Teams for Palo Alto:

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Carlin Otto
231 Whitclem Court
Palo Alto

From: [Ellen Hartog](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#); [Council, City](#)
Subject: Pedestrian bike crossing at Charleston meadow railroad crossings.
Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 9:42:00 AM

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

Thank you for reading my concerns. It has been brought to my attention that Pedestrian bike crossing only occur in North Palo Alto. We have bikes and walkers crossing intersections in South Palo Alto that are dangerous to say the least today! Please consider adding safe beautiful user friendly crossings at Charleston and Meadow which has the reputation for student suicides and which was never addressed other than lipstick on a pig. It's way past time to make safer crossings. The Charleston Arastradero improvements did nothing to improve walkability!!! Please do the right thing. The new solutions only exasperate walkability and destroy neighborhoods. At least come up with a solution we can live with for everyone involved - not just the commuters!!!

Thank you for your consideration.

Ellen Hartog
Pedestrian and cyclist
330 Victoria Place

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Eric Stietzel](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel; Transportation](#)
Subject: Railroad Updates
Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 8:56:26 AM

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

Life is short,
and we do not have
much time
to gladden the hearts of
those
who travel with us.

So be swift to love, and
Make haste to be kind.

Anon.

Eric R. Stietzel
239 Whitclem Court
Palo Alto, CA 94306-
4111

Phone: 650-804-0827
Fax: 650-494-3499
eric.stietzel@gmail.com



September 7, 2020

To the Members of Palo Alto's Grade Separation Teams:

Thank you for all your hard work analyzing the possible solutions for this thorny and divisive issue. Now that decision time has come, please remember that whatever solution gets built, will last at least 100 years (4-5 generations), so let's choose the right solution !!!

The first point I'd like to make is that total cost should not be a deciding factor. Rather we must consider the amortized cost over 100 years just as we homeowners

do when we mortgaged our homes and consider the cost in comparison to the long-term real estate values in Palo Alto.

A completely underground **tunnel** will give Palo Alto the following benefits:

1. The land above the tunnel can be reclaimed for use as parks, bike paths, dog-walks, tennis courts, etc.
2. There will be no divisive physical barrier down the middle of Palo Alto.
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Please do NOT select any option that elevates the train above ground level.

The absolute worst option is the viaduct (elevated structure).

The second worst option is the hybrid (elevated berm).

These options are the ugliest, the dirtiest, the noisiest, the most visibly intrusive and divisive.

Please note that during construction, those of us living near the tracks will pay the price of noise, dirt, and disruption from beginning to end of whatever choice is

made.

Sincerely,

Eric R. Stietzel
239 Whitclem Court
Palo Alto, CA 94306-4111
650.804.0827

Life is short,
and we do not have much time
to gladden the hearts of those
who travel with us.

So be swift to love, and
Make haste to be kind.

Anon.

From: [Wilson, Sarah](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: San Francisco to San José Project Section Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS)
Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 12:01:22 PM
Attachments: [2020-09-08 HSR San Francisco to San Jose Project Section EIR Comments Palo Alto.pdf](#)

Hello XCAP members,

On behalf of City Manager Ed Shikada, I would like to inform you that the attached letter was sent to the Northern California Regional Office of the California High-Speed Rail Authority regarding the City's comments to the San Francisco to San José Project Section Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS).

Thank you,

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



OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

CITY OF PALO ALTO
250 Hamilton Avenue, 7th Floor
Palo Alto, CA 94301
650.329.2392

September 8, 2020

Northern California Regional Office
California High-Speed Rail Authority
100 Paseo De San Antonio, Suite 300
San Jose, CA 95113
Email: san.jose@hsr.ca.gov

RE: The San Francisco to San José Project Section Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS)

Thank you for including the City of Palo Alto in the environmental review process for the above-referenced project. The California High Speed Rail (HSR) will have a long-lasting and far-reaching impact on the City of Palo Alto; therefore, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on this Draft EIR/EIS as a responsible agency for the Project.

Executive Summary

The Draft EIR/EIS is seriously flawed in numerous respects as outlined in this letter. Fundamentally, the document fails to adequately analyze, much less mitigate, a variety of clear and significant impacts that this project will cause to the Palo Alto community. Failure of the Draft EIR/EIS to consider the cumulative impacts of this project with the Caltrain business plan through the four at-grade crossings would pose an increased safety risk of collisions between trains and people walking, biking, and driving across these crossings. When examining impacts, the Draft EIR/EIS does not analyze the reasonably foreseeable consequences and impacts of the adopted or on-going planning efforts of other users of the corridor that are tied to the HSR project. Such a disconnect ignores the impacts related to the at-grade crossings and the additional four-tracking that may be needed within the corridor. The proposed project alternatives lead to significant impacts to emergency response, noise, and circulation. Grade separation between tracks and crossings at Meadow Drive, Charleston Road, Churchill Avenue, and Palo Alto Avenue would address the impacts related to noise with the elimination of train horns and alleviate the other safety concerns posed at-grade intersection. There is no rationale for excluding grade separations as a feasible mitigation particularly given the Federal Rail Administration's conclusion that the Palo Alto at-grade crossings are amongst the most dangerous in the State. The Draft EIR/EIS falls woefully short of any reasonable standard of environmental analysis.

Project Understanding

The City of Palo Alto (City) understands that, Consistent with Tier 1 decisions, the San Francisco to San Jose Project Section (Project Section or project) would provide High Speed Rail (HSR) service from the Salesforce Transit Center (SFTC) in San Francisco to Diridon Station in San Jose along approximately 49 miles of the Caltrain corridor. Within the City of Palo Alto, the project would be located along 3.8 miles of Caltrain right-of-way through the middle of Palo Alto, where the existing Caltrain tracks bifurcate the City from east to West. The current project design proposes a blended infrastructure with Caltrain operations through the City. The current proposed project, as well as both Alternatives carried forward in the environmental analysis, propose two at-grade tracks through the City, mostly within the existing Caltrain right-of-way.



The City understands that within Palo Alto, the project would require slight modifications (typically of less than one foot) to the tracks in several areas to straighten curves in order to support higher speeds. The project also requires the installation of two radio towers (one north of Embarcadero Road and one north of West Charleston Road), four-quadrant gates at existing at-grade crossings, and either fencing or sound walls along the entire corridor within the City. The Project will provide HSR services at a downtown San Francisco station, a Millbrae station, and the San Jose Diridon Station; no station is proposed within the City of Palo Alto under the current proposed project or either of the two alternatives.

The blended system would accommodate operating speeds of up to 110 mph for up to four HSR trains and six Caltrain trains per hour per direction in the peak period. HSR and Caltrain are the only passenger rail services that would operate in the blended system. North of the Santa Clara Caltrain Station, freight would use the same tracks as HSR and Caltrain but would operate at night with temporal separation to avoid conflicting with HSR and Caltrain operation, similar to existing conditions.

Rail Alignment, Profile, and Right-of-Way

1. As discussed further throughout this letter, the EIR/EIS shall consider an alternative or mitigation that includes grade separation of the existing at-grade crossings within the City to reduce impacts related to land use, transportation, and safety that would result from the project. Impacts under these three resources have not been fully identified and mitigated in the Draft EIR/EIS. Additionally, the Authority shall begin inter-agency conversations with the City and other relevant state, regional and local agencies with respect to fair-share funding contributions for grade separations.
2. The City understands that two options are provided for each of the two radio towers required within the City. For each of these two options a site located on private property (4131 Park Blvd and 100 Addison Avenue) and a site located within Caltrain right-of-way is shown. The installation of these towers requires a discretionary permit from the City of Palo Alto and may require easements and/or encroachment permits, depending on which option is selected. The City would not support the location of these towers on private property if an alternate location within Caltrain right-of-way is viable. If construction of either of these radio towers is necessary on private property, the California High Speed Rail Authority (Authority) shall contact and inform these property owners and coordinate for such needs with these property owners prior to filing for any permits from the City.
3. The EIR baseline operational analysis considers only six (6) trains per direction during the peak hours for Caltrain services, which requires the two tracks currently proposed. However, Caltrain's 2040 Vision Plan identifies a moderate growth scenario that calls for eight (8) Caltrain trains per direction during the peak hours and a high growth scenario that calls for twelve (12) Caltrain trains per direction during the peak hours. This conflict in corridor planning needs to be reconciled. The City understands that if eight (8) trains are proposed during the peak hours, additional passing tracks would be necessary. Based on Caltrain's adopted 2040 Vision Plan, this shall be considered a reasonably foreseeable future project and shall be analyzed under the Cumulative scenario. The location of these additional passing tracks shall be disclosed, and the impacts of these tracks must be fully evaluated.

Land Use

4. In the City's scoping comments dated March 31, 2009, the City of Palo Alto requested that the Authority utilize the City's CEQA thresholds in evaluating impacts on components within the City's jurisdiction. However, the EIR/EIS established its own thresholds for land use impacts, which do not reflect the City's thresholds or the State CEQA Guidelines. As a responsible agency, the City of Palo Alto will rely on this EIR in issuing the necessary permits for construction of the project. Therefore, for the purposes of CEQA, the environmental analysis needs to evaluate impacts under land use consistent with the thresholds recommended by the state and adopted by the City of Palo Alto. This includes an analysis of:

- whether the project would physically divide and established community; and
 - whether the project would cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.
5. In accordance with the thresholds identified above, the EIR/EIS must analyze the impacts of HSR preemptions at at-grade crossings and the construction of a noise barrier across the City. With major educational (elementary, middle, high schools, Stanford University), employment centers, and central business districts across the train corridor, the addition of HSR preemptions for at-grade intersections and a 12-14 foot noise barrier across the majority of the tracks will significantly impact connections across the City, visually and physically dividing the community. Because these impacts have not been properly identified, mitigations measures have similarly not been identified to reduce these impacts.
6. In accordance with the thresholds identified above, the EIR/EIS must identify the project's conflicts with the City's Comprehensive Plan policies and Municipal Code Regulations. Land Use Section 3.13 does not identify any inconsistencies with the City of Palo Alto's policies or regulations and concludes that the projects impacts would be less than significant without the need for mitigation.

However, Appendix 2-J clearly states that the project is inconsistent with the City of Palo Alto's Comprehensive Plan policies and regulations with respect to noise. Table 1 of Appendix 2-J acknowledges that "Although mitigation measures would be able to reduce project noise levels, they would not reduce all levels to the standards for residential, commercial, and institutional land uses due to the limitations in noise barrier cost effectiveness, implementation (HSR cannot implement quiet zones; only local jurisdictions can), and funding (in regards to grade separations)."

Land Use Section 3.13 must be revised to accurately reflect that the project would have a significant impact with respect to inconsistencies with applicable plans and policies within the City of Palo Alto. It must clearly identify the mitigation measures that would reduce that impact to the extent feasible. If mitigation does not reduce this impact to a less than significant level, the EIR/EIS must conclude, for the purposes of CEQA, that impacts would be significant and unavoidable with respect to consistency with local land use policies.

Noise

7. Impact NV#1 in Section 3.4 of the EIR/EIS identifies temporary exposure of sensitive receptors to construction noise as a significant and unavoidable impact. The proposed mitigation (NV-MM#1) encourages, but does not require, daytime construction. It appears to allow the construction contractor to determine the appropriate measures to limit noise but does not set a performance measure that the contractor is required to meet. It only requires reporting after the fact (annually) to the Authority, identifying measures that were implemented. NV-MM#1 should be revised to require daytime construction if other measures cannot effectively reduce impacts to a less than significant level in accordance with the established thresholds for nighttime noise.
8. Table 3.4-25 of the Draft EIR/EIS explains that under Impact NV#8, temporary exposure of sensitive receptors and buildings to construction vibrations, the project "would cause annoyance at nighttime to sensitive receptors within 140 feet for infrequent events and within 300 feet for repetitive equipment such as pile driving, vibratory compaction, and ongoing demolition work with jackhammers or hoe-rams." However, NV-MM#2 only appears to address potential impacts to buildings and does not address impacts to sensitive receptors that may be impacted by vibrations at nighttime. Although NV-IAMF#1 (impact, avoidance and minimization feature) is identified to reduce impacts to sensitive receptors, this measure primarily reduces noise rather than vibration. The measure does not identify performance criteria that must be met to reduce impacts on sensitive receptors to a less than significant level.

Within the City there are hundreds of sensitive receptors along this corridor, many of which are residences that would be severely impacted due to nighttime vibrations during construction. The Draft EIR/EIS must identify mitigation with clear performance criteria to reduce impacts to these sensitive receptors to a less than significant level. Mitigation shall include prohibition of nighttime construction that causes vibration if other measures cannot effectively reduce impacts to a less than significant level. Pile driving at nighttime shall be prohibited.

9. The analysis of both noise and vibrations needs to clearly quantify the expected level of noise and vibration that sensitive receptors would experience before and after the implementation of mitigation. The analysis currently only provides information on the number of receptors that would be impacted before and after mitigation; not on the level of impact that those receptors would experience.
10. The proposed construction hours for track modifications are outside of the City's allowed construction hours, as established in Chapter 9.10 of the City's Municipal Code. Construction outside of the allowed construction hours requires a permit from the City. The City would not issue this permit for construction activities near residential areas if measures cannot be implemented to reduce impacts on receptors to a less than significant level.
11. Under Impact NV# 2, the Draft EIR/EIS concludes that implementation of the project alternatives would not change current practices regarding the sounding of train horns and crossing bells, but would change the amount of train horns and crossing bells sounding due to the additional trains. Additional trains will cause noise levels above existing ambient levels and in exceedance of FRA criteria, causing severe noise impacts at sensitive receptors.

The City understands that the project has analyzed two scenarios with respect to mitigation for noise associated with train horns. The first scenario assumes that quiet zones have not been established within the peninsula and identifies the location where sound walls would therefore be constructed along the corridor to reduce noise levels associated. The City understands that sound walls would be constructed along the majority of the corridor within the City of Palo Alto if quiet zones are not established at the City's existing at-grade crossings. Under the second scenario, if the City were to establish quiet zones for the City of Palo Alto through the requisite process, this would eliminate the requirement for all trains to routinely sound their warning horns when approaching at-grade crossings. Under this scenario, the EIR/EIS shows that sound walls would therefore only be necessary in three locations with the City of Palo Alto.

The City recommends that the Authority shall consider grade separation for at-grade crossings due to safety and other reasons stated in this letter, which is feasible mitigation that would also mitigate the need for train horns and therefore construction of noise barriers across the City. However, for the interim measures until grade crossings are built the City of Palo Alto recommends the Authority to establish a Quiet Zone within the City of Palo Alto. In addition, since this process is only necessary to address impacts of the proposed project (as an alternative to noise barriers) the City of Palo Alto shall not bear the financial burden of the process to establish a Quiet Zone. The mitigation measures must require that the Authority bear any costs and to support the process of establishing a Quiet Zone for any jurisdiction that elects to pursue this alternative as well as any liabilities associated with this.

Transportation

12. The City has established a Local transportation Impact Analysis Policy (See Attachment A). The City requests that the Authority comply with this policy, in addition to CEQA and NEPA guidelines, in order to assess the project's local impacts within the City's jurisdiction. The analysis of intersection delays

that was included in the Draft EIR/EIS under Impact TR#5 shall utilize the City's significance criteria when determining whether localized impacts would occur outside of CEQA.

13. Section 3.2 of the Draft EIR/EIS analyzes impacts on bicycle and pedestrian access and Section 3.11 of the Draft EIR/EIS studies hazards associated with the project. However, the Draft EIR/EIS does not adequately analyze the potential hazards associated with the increase in the number of trains and increase in train speeds on school age pedestrians and bicyclists.

In Palo Alto, approximately 58 percent of students from elementary school to high school ages walked or biked to school in 2019. Therefore, a significant number of school age children cross the train tracks at existing at-grade crossings in order to attend nearby K-12 schools (e.g. Hoover Elementary, Palo Alto High, Castilleja, etc.). The proposed four-channel crossing gate mechanism is not adequate to protect these children; this shall be identified as a significant impact with respect to safety and shall be evaluated further. Providing a grade-separated crossing would reduce impacts on pedestrians and bicyclists, including school age children.

14. With the addition of new trains, the proposed gate down time during peak hours will increase by almost 67% (with the addition of 4 HSR). These additional trains throughout the day reduce the time available for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross through the at-grade locations in Palo Alto (Churchill, Meadow, Charleston and Palo Alto) crossings. The impact of the proposed project on these crossing connections for pedestrians and bicyclists must be analyzed and mitigated.
15. Impacts TR # 1 through TR #5 identify impacts and delays on intersection operations. As explained on page 3.2.63, the project results in a 334 second increase in delays at Churchill and 187 second increase in delays at West Meadow Drive. This will severely affect signal operations and controls and thus traffic flow in the area. Although under SB 743 vehicle delays are no longer considered a significant impact under CEQA, the delay at these intersections will impact other modes of transportation such as bicyclists, pedestrians, and bus transit. Such impacts to other modes of transportation still require analysis and appropriate mitigation in accordance with CEQA. These impacts have not been properly identified and TR-MM#1 does not adequately address these impacts.
16. Vehicle delays would also result in extensive queueing spilling on to through lanes and may cause the need for additional storage for turning movements. Extensive queueing will create safety hazards near at grade crossings. The intersection geometry at all four at-grade crossings within the City must be studied in order to properly identify potential hazards and these impacts shall be mitigated.
17. With major educational (elementary, middle, high schools, Stanford University), employment centers, and central business districts across the train corridor, the addition of HSR preemptions for at-grade intersections will significantly impact all modes of transit throughout the day, causing impacts on the transportation system. These impacts have not been properly identified; therefore, mitigations measures have similarly not been identified to reduce these impacts.
18. The project proposes a change in the speed of trains from 79 mph to 110 mph. This change will reduce the reaction time for pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular activities. In addition, this will impact advanced preemption timings for nearby signals. The existing signals in the vicinity, until grade separated, will need to have advanced preemption to ensure that there is adequate queue clearance, pedestrian times, track clearance and signal operation coordination. These impacts are identified generally but are not quantified and clearly explained to address such impacts. The project shall describe how these improvements will be funded and constructed. The City does not support higher speeds of trains running through urbanized area and therefore requests to use Caltrain planned speed limits or speeds that match existing speed of Caltrain service unless grade separation is proposed at crossings.

19. The analysis shall evaluate service options that include HSR operating at the same speed as Caltrain from San Jose to San Francisco and must identify the safety benefits that could be derived by running slower speed trains in an urban environment.
20. Due to additional delay at the intersections near the at-grade crossings, the traffic may be diverted to other parallel residential streets, thus impacting the character of neighborhood and livability of Palo Alto residents. These impacts must be identified and mitigated and shall be studied in accordance to City of Palo Alto Traffic Impact policy on Traffic Infusion and Residential Environment (TIRE) (Attachment B in Exhibit A).
21. Under Impact TR#7, the analysis identifies that the HSR will increase the parking demand on the other Caltrain stations with increased ridership to connect to get onto HSR at other HSR stations. This increase in ridership to get to HSR transit hubs will necessitate additional parking at other existing Caltrain Stations. This must be identified and mitigated in the EIR/EIS.
22. Impact TR# 9 and TR#11 study permanent and continuous impacts on bus transit. However, the Draft EIR/EIS fails to recognize existing transit routes near the corridor that are impacted by project. Alma Avenue, which parallels the HSR tracks in Palo Alto, is a major road used by express bus transit. The intersections along this corridor will experience significant delays at traffic signals adjacent to at-grade crossings, which in turn, will affect express bus service. TR-MM#2 identifies the transit priority for corridors but fails to identify such impacts on Alma Avenue, and therefore fails to provide any mitigation to address this impact.

Public Services

23. As discussed on Draft EIR/EIS Page 3.11-60, the reduced availability of crossings will impact emergency response times. The project includes mitigation, which includes the Authority's fair share toward reducing the vehicle response time; however, impacts are still identified as significant and unavoidable. Under CEQA, the analysis must analyze any feasible mitigation or alternatives to address impacts before identifying an impact as significant and unavoidable. An alternative or mitigation that includes grade separation for at-grade crossings must be evaluated to ensure adequate response times. If the Authority does not pursue at-grade crossings as part of an alternative or as mitigation to restore response times, the Authority shall bear the full cost of restoring response times to existing conditions.

Historic

24. The proposed project identifies track modifications, including horizontal alignment changes of more than 1 foot and less than 3 feet on the SPRR San Francisquito Creek Bridge, which is located approximately 10 feet west of the Historic El Palo Alto redwood tree. Track work in this location may also require relocation of OCS poles and OCS pole electrical safety zones. The EIR/EIS concludes that the project would not result in modifications to the El Palo Alto redwood, and that impacts would therefore be less than significant without mitigation. However, although the project does not propose direct removal or modifications to the tree, grading or the use of vibratory equipment for track work within 10 feet of the historic tree could result in direct or indirect impacts to the root structure. These impacts must be evaluated and mitigated to ensure that impacts to this historic landmark would remain less than significant.

Utilities

25. Impact PUE#2 identifies impacts associated with the relocation or removal of existing major utilities as less than significant without mitigation. However, construction activities that result in vibrations above or immediately adjacent to existing infrastructure could indirectly impact infrastructure. The City of

Palo Alto owns and maintains a wide variety of infrastructure that cross these tracks. The potential for indirect impacts must be identified and mitigation shall be included to require advanced coordination with the City when working in close proximity to its infrastructure as well as to verify, post-construction, that the City's infrastructure has not been damaged.

26. Although the analysis concludes that the Authority and service providers would work to relocate utilities on a long-term basis, the discussion identifies that temporary utility disruptions may occur. Although applicant proposed measures are identified to reduce these impacts and provide notifications to customers, the duration of these outages is unclear. The document needs to more clearly identify the anticipated temporary impacts on utilities, including the likely duration of outages that may be necessary.

Trees and Vegetation

27. The proposed project plans appear to show that new walls or fence would be installed up to the edge of the existing right-of-way, with no space planned for planting vegetation screening. It is unclear to what extent existing vegetation along the right-of-way, which currently provides effective screening in some locations, would be retained or replanted. Space needs to be provided for vegetation screening, especially where the rail is within close proximity to sensitive receptors.

28. MM-39 states that mitigation would be provided at no more than a 1:1 ratio unless the City's ordinance provides for stricter ratios. For mitigation within the City, the project would be required to replace trees in accordance with the City's Tree Tech Manual tree value replacement standard, as outlined in the City's Tree Technical Manual, which is codified in Chapter 8 of the City's Municipal Code. The Tree Technical Manual can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/PA-Tree-Technical-Manual>

We appreciate the opportunity to comment and look forward to reviewing the Final EIR/EIS, including responses to the City's comments. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Philip Kamhi at (650) 329-2500 or via e-mail at Philip.Kamhi@cityofpaloalto.org

Sincerely,



Ed Shikada
City Manager

Attachments:

Exhibit A: Local transportation Impact Analysis Policy

CC:

Palo Alto City Council Members
Expanded Community Advisory Panel
Palo Alto Planning and Transportation Commission
Palo Alto Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee
Palo Alto Safe Routes to School Committee



**CITY OF PALO ALTO
LOCAL TRANSPORTATION IMPACT ANALYSIS POLICY**

Senate Bill (SB) 743, adopted in 2013, required the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to prepare amendments to the CEQA Guidelines with respect to the analysis of potential transportation effects to provide an alternative metric to traffic congestion and delay at intersections (often referred to as Level of Service (LOS)). After five years of analysis and outreach, in December 2018, the California Natural Resources Agency approved OPR’s proposed amendments to the CEQA Guidelines requiring agencies to use vehicle miles traveled (VMT) generated by a project as the metric for transportation impact analyses under CEQA effective July 1, 2020. Under SB 743 and the revised CEQA Guidelines, LOS may no longer be used to determine whether a project may have a significant environmental impact to transportation and traffic under CEQA.

While statewide implementation of VMT analysis to replace LOS analysis is required under CEQA, SB 743 did not require changes to transportation analyses outside of CEQA, including the evaluation of regionally significant intersections under the Congestion Management Program (CMP) under a separate state law. Nor did SB 743 affect the discretion of public agencies to assess impacts on local streets and intersections for compliance with adopted plans and policies. As such, in conformance with Policy T-2.3 and Program T-2.3.1 of the City’s [Comprehensive Plan 2030](#),¹ LOS standards are adopted through this policy to analyze potential local transportation impacts of projects in Palo Alto.

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure consistency in reviewing and identifying transportation effects of proposed development projects for local intersections and facilities and to determine standards for necessary remediation measures.

¹ Comprehensive Plan Policy T-2.3: Use motor vehicle LOS at signalized intersections to evaluate the potential impact of proposed projects, including contributions to cumulative congestion. Use signal warrants and other metrics to evaluate impacts at unsignalized intersections.

Program T-2.3.1: When adopting new CEQA significance thresholds for VMT for compliance with SB 743 (2013), adopt standards for vehicular LOS analysis for use in evaluating the consistency of a proposed project with the Comprehensive Plan, and also explore desired standards for MMLOS, which includes motor vehicle LOS, at signalized intersections.

Policy T-2.4: Consistent with the principles of Complete Streets adopted by the City, work to achieve and maintain acceptable levels of service for transit vehicles, bicyclists, pedestrians and automobiles on roads in Palo Alto, while maintaining the ability to customize to the Palo Alto context.

Policy T-3.3: Avoid major increases in single-occupant vehicle capacity when constructing or modifying roadways unless needed to remedy severe congestion or critical neighborhood traffic problems. Where capacity is increased, balance the needs of motor vehicles with those of pedestrians and bicyclists

II. Level of Service (LOS) Analysis

LOS is the measurement of delay at intersections used to determine whether a project is consistent with the City’s Comprehensive Plan and this Policy LOS is based on the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) methodology where a letter grade is assigned to an intersection operation based on the amount of delay motorists experience in traveling through the intersection. Table 1 below shows the comparison in LOS depending on whether the intersection is signalized or not.

Table 1: Level of Service Delay – Signalized vs. Non-Signalized Intersections

Level of Service Grade	Description	Signalized Average Delay (Sec)	Unsignalized Average Delay (Sec)
A	Signal Progression is extremely favorable. Little or no traffic delay.	10.0 or less	10.0 or less
B	Operations characterized by good signal progression and/or short cycle lengths. Short traffic delays.	10.1 to 20.0	10.1 to 15.0
C	Higher delays may result from fair signal progression. Average traffic delays.	20.1 to 35.0	15.1 to 25.0
D	Congestion becomes noticeable. Long traffic delays.	35.1 to 55.0	25.1 to 35.0
E	Considered the limit of acceptable delay.	55.1 to 80.0	35.1 to 50.0
F	Level of delay is considered unacceptable by most drivers. Extreme traffic delays.	Greater than 80.0	Greater than 50.0

Source: Transportation Research Board, Highway Capacity Manual 2010

III. Standards for Determining Transportation Analysis

1. ~~Within the CMP System~~ [Regional CMP Analysis](#)

Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) reports vary in scope depending on the use of the report and size of the project.

Under the purview of the California Congestion Management Program (CMP) Statute, Palo Alto must follow the methodologies presented in the [VTA Transportation Impact Analysis Guidelines](#) for intersections within the CMP system, to evaluate transportation effects and submit a full TIA report of all development projects that are expected to generate 100 or more net new weekday (AM or PM peak hour) or weekend peak hour trips, including both inbound and outbound trips.

CMP intersections within Palo Alto are listed below. A map of all CMP intersections can be found in Attachment A.

- i. Middlefield Rd./Oregon Exp.
- ii. Middlefield Rd./San Antonio Rd.
- iii. El Camino Real/University Ave./Palm Dr.
- iv. El Camino Real/ Sand Hill Rd./Palo Alto Ave.
- v. El Camino Real/Embarcadero Rd.
- vi. El Camino Real/Page Mill Rd.
- vii. El Camino Real/Arastradero Rd./Charleston Rd.
- viii. Foothill Exp./Junipero Serra Blvd./Page Mill Rd.
- ix. Foothill Exp./Arastradero Rd.
- x. San Antonio Rd./Charleston Rd.

2. Outside the CMP System Local Analysis

The City requires a Local Transportation Analysis (LTA) report for any project that is expected to generate 50 or more net new weekday (AM or PM peak hour) trips, including both inbound and outbound trips, prior to any reductions assumed for Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures. The City may also require a LTA if in its reasonable judgement a project will potentially cause a deficiency in the operation of local intersections. A LTA report must include the following:

- i. Project description;
- ii. Existing conditions;
- iii. Site access and circulation;
- iv. Vehicle trip generation (weekday AM and PM peak);
- v. Vehicle trip distribution;
- ~~vi.~~ vi. LOS analysis for selected study intersections; and
- ~~vii.~~ vii. Remediation measures (if proposed)

Depending on the size and layout of the project, additional elements listed below may be required by the City to include in the LTA report.

- i. Traffic Infusion on Residential Environments (TIRE) Analysis is an analysis of new potential traffic disturbances along a local residential streets created by a project as described in the Attachment B. When a proposed development project is expected to add 10 or more peak hour vehicles per any direction to a local residential street that is not on a project's direct route to collector or arterial streets, the project is required to submit a TIRE analysis.
- ii. Queuing Analysis that identifies queues spilling beyond their current storage bays. Improvements may include lengthening storage bays to meet projected

demand or roadway capacity improvements to add additional turn pockets at an intersection. The City typically takes the lead in identifying potential capacity improvements to help facilities site design.

- iii. Transit Analysis for projects located along a key transit route, such as El Camino Real, a focused analysis in partnership with the VTA or other transit operators is provided to determine if off-site improvement of a project should consider additional parking stop improvements such as shelters or bus duck-outs.
- iv. Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation Study is an analysis of how the site operations may affect bicycle and pedestrian operations. Where appropriate, if a project is located along a major bicycle route in the City's [Bicycle & Pedestrian Transportation Plan](#), the project may be required to help implement a portion of the recommended facility. Additional improvements may include limiting driveway curb-cuts to minimize conflicts with pedestrians or provision of enhanced crosswalk facilities.
- v. Parking Analysis is a study to determine location, use, and adequacy of the proposed parking facility. Projects should include a parking analysis under the following conditions:
 - a. Change in the facilities' existing design or supply; or
 - b. Change in the existing parking management; or
 - c. Propose parking less than that required by the Palo Alto Municipal Code 18.52 (<https://tinyurl.com/PA-Municipal-Code>); or
 - d. Use of parking adjustments by the Director as defined in the Palo Alto Municipal Code 18.52 (<https://tinyurl.com/PA-Municipal-Code>).

When a proposed project requests a parking reduction or exception as allowed under the Municipal Code, a robust Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan is typically required independent of the LTA. For projects in a Parking Assessment District, required payment of assessments to the District will be noted in the LTA report and included in the project's conditions of approval.

A project will provide an analysis of one or more of the above elements if the project is expected to substantially affect the identified local facilities, even if the anticipated number of new vehicle trips would not require a LOS analysis.

IV. Local Transportation Impacts – Standards for Determining Transportation Consistency

1. Level of Service Standard

The City of Palo Alto's Level of Service (LOS) standard is D, which is more conservative than the CMP LOS standard of E. If the LTA shows that a development project is anticipated to cause a transportation facility (intersection or roadway) to degrade below LOS D to LOS E or F, then the project will be deemed inconsistent with this Policy.

For a transportation facility determined to have been at LOS E or F under existing and background conditions without the project, a project is said to have significant local impact if the LTA shows that the project will cause LOS to deteriorate by the following amounts:

- i. Addition of project traffic increases the average delay for critical movements by four or more seconds; or
- ii. Addition of project traffic increases the critical Volume/Capacity (V/C) value by 0.01 or more; or
- iii. Affects a freeway segment or ramp to operate at LOS F or project traffic increases freeway capacity by one or more percent.

2. Selection of Study Intersections or Roadways

An intersection should be included in the LTA if it meets any one of the following conditions:

- i. Proposed development project is expected to add 10 or more peak hour vehicles per any lane to any intersection movement; or
- ii. The intersection is adjacent to the project; or
- iii. Based on engineering judgement, City staff determines that the intersection should be included in the analysis.

Additionally, a roadway segment should be included in the LTA with a TIRE analysis if a proposed development project is expected to add 10 or more peak hour vehicles per any direction to a local residential street. More details on the TIRE analysis are available in Attachment B.

3. CMP Intersection Standard

A CMP intersection must adhere to the standards set by the Congestion Management Agency² (currently LOS E), as set forth in the [VTA Transportation Impact Analysis Guidelines](#). The City's standard of LOS D would apply for determining local level impacts.. Any transportation impact triggered by VTA's standard for CMP intersections would need to be addressed following guidelines established by VTA. More information regarding mitigation measures and Multimodal Improvement Plans (MIP) are available in the VTA Guidelines for TIAs and Deficiency Plans.

4. Auto Level of Service Analysis at Unsignalized Intersections

For all-way stop control, the LOS is based on the average delay. For 1- or 2-way stop control, the LOS should be based on the critical approach movement. The above standards for determining transportation consistency remain appropriate only if traffic volumes satisfy the peak hour traffic signal warrant. Meeting a peak hour traffic signal warrant does not automatically make a traffic signal an appropriate remediation measure.

5. Other Transportation Impacts

Depending on the size and layout of the project, a LTA may require analysis to evaluate other project-related effects on the transportation system. The following is a list of elements that are considered to have project-related local impacts:

- i. Result in noticeable traffic effects on local residential streets defined as an increase of 0.1 or more using the TIRE methodology.
- ii. Impede the development or function of existing or planned pedestrian or bicycle facilities.
- iii. Increase demand for pedestrian or bicycle facilities that cannot be met by existing or planned facilities.
- iv. Impede the operation of a transit system as a result of increased traffic congestion.
- v. Create demand for transit services that cannot be met by current or planned services.
- vi. Create the potential demand for cut-through traffic or redistribution of traffic to use local residential streets, based on the TIRE methodology described above.
- vii. Create an operational safety hazard.
- viii. Result in inadequate emergency access.

² The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) is the Congestion Management Agency (CMA) for Santa Clara County.

V. Remediation Measures

All Local Transportation Impacts under Section VI of this Policy must be addressed through the project's adoption or use of appropriate local remediation measures, including funding their associated costs. The LTA must include proposed remediation measures and identify any potential impacts of such measures. Remediation measures shall reduce the project-related local impacts to a level without the proposed project, and should not themselves create potentially significant CEQA impacts. These remediation measures will be incorporated in the project conditions of approval and not as part of the CEQA analysis. The following is a list of potential remediation methods in priority order:

1. Projects and programs that reduce a project's vehicle trip generation, including, but not limited to Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs, capital improvements to transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facility enhancements within an influential project area.³ The following is a non-exhaustive list of potential remediation methods:
 - i. Provide new or upgrade existing access to, from, and through the project for pedestrians and bicyclists.
 - ii. Provide improvements to transit facilities or services.
 - iii. Implement TDM programs such as flexible at-place working hours, telecommuting, carpools, shuttles, transit passes, parking cash-out, among others.
2. Multimodal operational or facility improvements including intersection operational efficiency treatments. Proposed improvements or treatments with geometric changes to an intersection are limited to features that would not likely lead to substantial or measurable increase in vehicle travel.
3. If project impacts cannot be remediated through methods 1 and 2 above, a fair share of the cost for multimodal network remediation shall be contributed to the City's transportation improvement funds.

While the remediation measures in method 1, above, should be proposed within an influential project area, methods 2 and 3 may apply outside the area. However, these proposed improvements should substantially contribute to the City's Comprehensive Plan goals in expanding the City's multimodal transportation system. By implementing or funding these types of improvements, the project would therefore be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and this Policy.

³ Area of influence of a project is defined as up to half-mile for pedestrian facilities and up to three miles for bicycle facilities, or bicycle facilities that provide a connection to the local or regional bicycle network.

Unacceptable Measures

In addition, remediation measures that will result in a physical reduction in the capacity and/or deterioration in the quality of any existing or planned transportation facilities are unacceptable. The following is a list of remediation methods that would be considered generally unacceptable without special justification, but are not limited to:

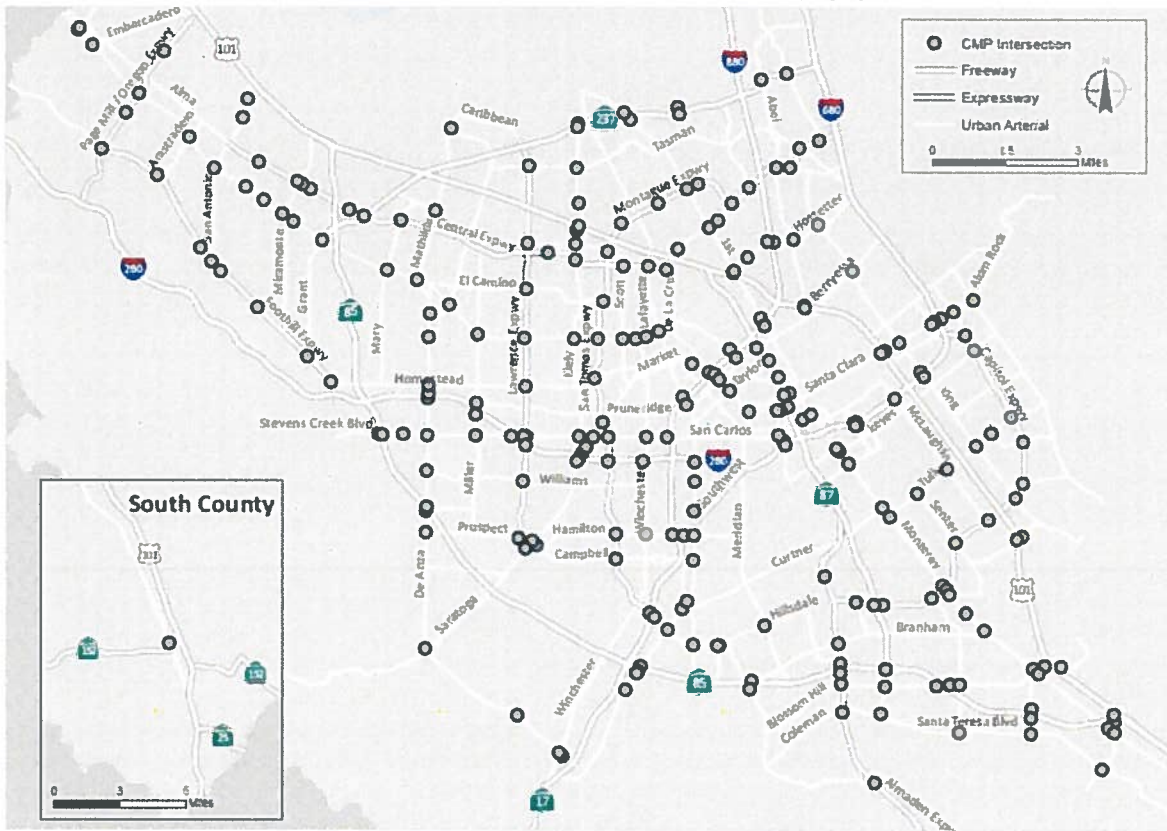
1. Roadway widening not directly related to site access and circulation, or specific conditions that reduce local impacts as a result of the project.
2. Negatively affecting a sidewalk or reducing the width of a sidewalk without substantial improvement to the overall pedestrian circulation.
3. Maintaining an existing sidewalk in the immediate vicinity that is below the current city standard.
4. Negatively affecting existing bicycle infrastructure or reducing the length of a bicycle infrastructure.
5. Maintaining existing bicycle infrastructure that is below the current city standard.
6. Eliminating a bus stop without adequate replacement or improvement to the system.
7. Encouraging neighborhood cut-through traffic (intrusion effects along local residential streets).

VI. Authority to Adopt Guidelines

The Chief Transportation Official is authorized to adopt guidelines to implement this Policy.



ATTACHMENT A
CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM INTERSECTIONS



Source: Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority Congestion Management Program Document 2017

ATTACHMENT B**CITY OF PALO ALTO – TRAFFIC INFUSION ON RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTS (TIRE) ANALYSIS**

Excessive vehicular speed and traffic volume on residential streets pose a major threat to quality of life. Most Palo Alto streets are bordered by residential uses, and it is the City's priority to preserve local neighborhood characteristics. Additionally, the City has designated some streets as residential arterials to recognize that they carry large traffic volumes of through-traffic but also have residential uses on both sides of the streets. The objective of this analysis is to address the desires of residents of these streets who prefer slower vehicular speeds and to determine if implementation of a project would cause a substantial change in the character of these streets.

The City of Palo Alto uses the Traffic Infusion on Residential Environments (TIRE) methodology to estimate residential perception of traffic effects based on anticipated average daily traffic growth. Although not required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) or pursuant to the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) guidelines, this methodology intends to determine new potential traffic disturbances – cut-through traffic (*intrusion effects*) and direct traffic (*infusion effects*) – along local residential streets due to a proposed development project.

For projects on a local residential street, new traffic disturbances along that specific street will likely be unavoidable. Thus, the potential infusion effects generated along a specific local residential street of which a project is proposed will be used only for informational purposes. A map of Palo Alto's local residential streets can be found in Map 1 in this attachment.

The City aims to reduce potential adverse *intrusion effects* along local residential streets. Significant amount of vehicle intrusion on these streets may need to be addressed through traffic management strategies.

Traffic Infusion on Residential Environments (TIRE) Index

The TIRE methodology assigns a numerical value to "residents' perception of traffic effects on activities such as walking, bicycling, and maneuvering out of a driveway on local residential streets." The TIRE index scale ranges from 0 to 5 depending on daily traffic volume. An index of 0 represents the least traffic disturbances and 5 the greatest, and thereby, the poorest residential environment. Streets with a TIRE index of 3 and above are considered to function primarily as a traffic street and exhibit an impaired residential environment. Therefore, streets with a TIRE index below 3 are better suited for residential activities.

Any projected change in the TIRE index of 0.1 or less is considered to have no noticeable effects. A change of 0.1 would be barely noticeable, and a change of 0.2 or greater would be noticeable. The TIRE Index can be found in Table 1 in this attachment.

I. Standards for Determining Analysis

A proposed development project expecting to add 10 or more peak hour vehicles per any direction to a local residential street.

II. Selection and Data Collection of Roadway Segments

Roadway segments should be included in the LTA if a proposed development project is expected to add 10 or more peak hour vehicles per any direction to a local residential street. Data collected under the TIRE methodology must be supported by 24-hour weekday traffic counts.

For projects on a local residential street including both single- or multi-family, as defined in the City's Comprehensive Plan 2030, the TIRE analysis must include the following:

1. Direct routes to the project;
2. Immediate connections to a project's direct collector or arterial streets; and
3. Based on engineering judgement, City staff determines what roadway segments should be included in the analysis.

A Palo Alto land use map can be found in Map 2 in this attachment.

III. Standards for Determining Noticeable Effect

Projected change in the TIRE index of 0.1 or more under existing and background conditions, is considered to cause noticeable effects on the character of local residential streets. These traffic effects may need to be addressed through traffic management strategies.

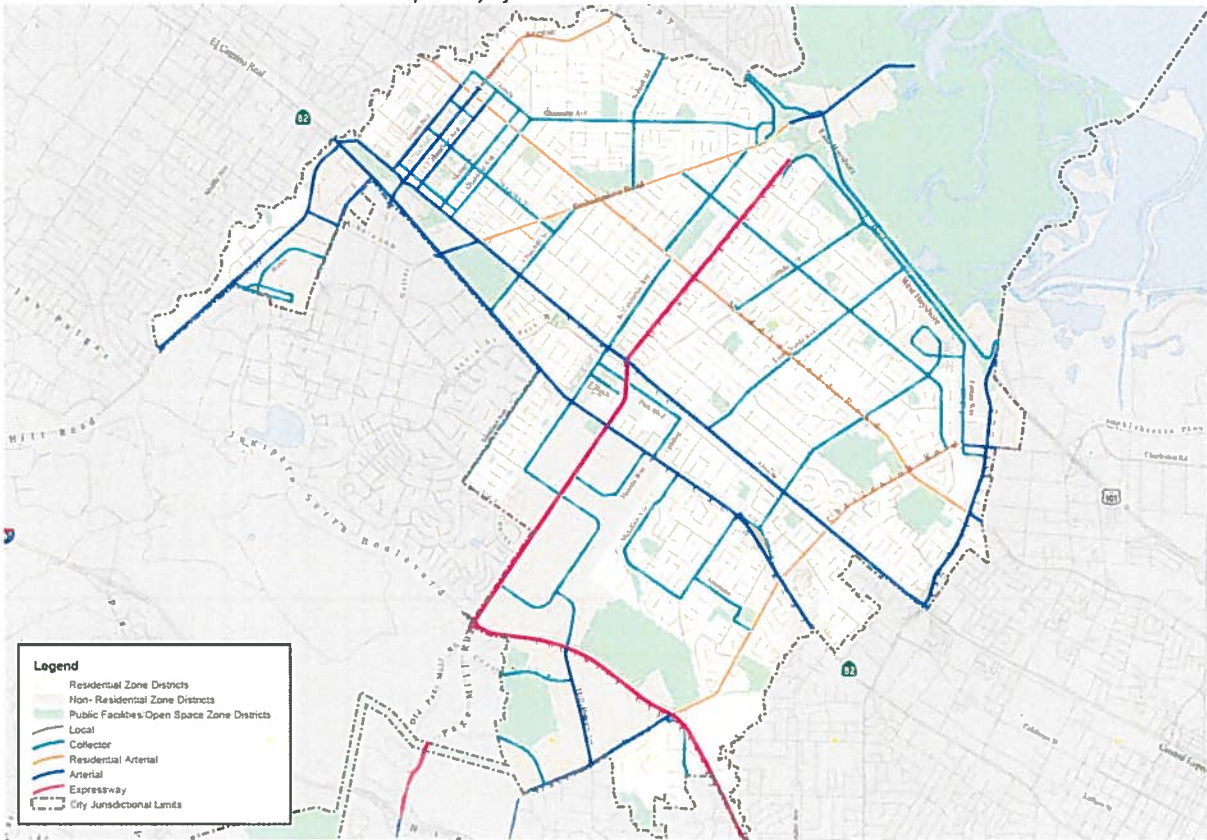
Table 1: Traffic Infusion on Residential Environments (TIRE) Index

TIRE Index	Existing Daily Traffic Volume	Volume to Cause +0.1 Change in TIRE Index	Volume to Cause +0.2 Change in TIRE Index	Volume Description
1.5	29-35	6	15	Low
1.6	36-44	8	20	
1.7	45-56	10	25	
1.8	57-70	13	32	
1.9	71-89	17	41	
2.0	90-110	22	52	Moderate
2.1	111-140	29	65	
2.2	141-180	40	80	
2.3	181-220	52	100	
2.4	221-280	65	125	
2.5	281-350	79	160	
2.6	351-450	94	205	
2.7	451-560	114	260	
2.8	561-710	140	330	
2.9	711-890	170	415	
3.0	891-1,100	220	520	High
3.1	1,101-1,400	290	650	
3.2	1,401-1,800	380	800	
3.3	1,801-2,200	500	1,000	
3.4	2,201-2,800	650	1,300	
3.5	2,801-3,500	825	1,700	
3.6	3,501-4,500	1,025	2,200	
3.7	4,501-5,600	1,250	2,800	
3.8	5,601-7,100	1,500	3,500	
3.9	7,101-8,900	1,800	4,300	
4.0	8,901-11,000	2,300	5,300	Very High
4.1	11,001-14,000	3,000	6,500	
4.2	14,001-18,000	4,000	8,000	
4.3	18,001-22,000	5,200	10,000	
4.4	22,001-28,000	6,600	13,000	
4.5	28,001-35,000	8,200	17,000	
4.6	35,001-45,000	10,000	22,000	
4.7	45,001-56,000	12,200	28,000	
4.8	56,001-71,000	14,800	35,000	
4.9	71,001-89,000	18,000	43,000	

Source: Goodrich Traffic Group



Map 1 City of Palo Alto Local Residential Streets



Source: City of Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan 2030

From: [Jim Silver](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Underpass option support
Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 8:30:01 PM

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Dear Xcap,

I am writing in strong support of the Underpass option. The elevated options (Viaduct and Hybrid) will divide the community, are inherently ugly and an eyesore. While I would be OK with the trench option, I think it will not be feasible because of the nearby creeks. Therefore the underpass seems like the best option. I believe that any shortcomings of the underpass can be addressed by minor modifications, such as an underground roundabout that would allow easy bicycle/pedestrian traffic, and would also eliminate or reduce the need for any private property acquisition.

Thank you for your consideration
James Silver
45 Roosevelt Circle
Palo Alto, CA 94306

From: [Marilyn Gillespie](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Charleston Railroad Crossing Grade Separation
Date: Wednesday, September 9, 2020 11:17:51 AM
Attachments: [City Council Letter September 2020.doc](#)

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

Dear Palo Alto City Council Members,

Please see attached.

Thank You.

Marilyn and Robert Gillespie
384 Whitclem Drive
Palo Alto, CA 94306

September 9, 2020

Dear Palo Alto City Council Members,

I am writing to express the deep concern that both my husband and I share regarding the options under review for the Palo Alto Grade Separation Program especially as it pertains to the Charleston-Meadows crossings.

As long time residents of the Charleston-Meadows neighborhood (over 50 years) and as former career employees of the City of Palo Alto (Fire Department and Library), both my husband and I have seen the many changes that the city has undergone over the years. We have seen how the City Council members have methodically and carefully looked at how their decisions might impact not only the current generation but those that follow. We appreciate the dedication that the community and many of its leaders have made to insure that the values of this town and its resident as well as its users benefit from these careful decisions.

One of the values that we presumably all hold dear is that the residents of Palo Alto are able live in a safe, green environment filled with cultural and education enhancements and one where people can enjoy a sensory pleasing environment as well.

Your charge now is to determine how you might best provide not only for today but for the future. And, this decision must be one that looks at continuing to do whatever you can to ensure that the residents and users of this city might to benefit from the values we all share.

So, when you consider the options for the Charleston-Meadows crossing, please focus on the values we share today and the benefits for the future. An aesthetically pleasing environment and one where the noise level is manageable for a neighborhood must be strongly considered as the highest priority. So, therefore, we ask you to choose the option that puts the train tracks underground.

Thank you.

Marilyn and Robert Gillespie
384 Whitclem Drive
Palo Alto, CA 94306

From: [June](#)
To: [Expanded Community Advisory Panel](#)
Subject: Rail input
Date: Wednesday, September 9, 2020 9:18:02 AM

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For Charleston and Meadow **Trench is the best and only** choice! Since the rail is so close to the residents' houses any other option will make the quality of life in the community much worse. All other options also have potential safety issues. **Trench!!!**