

Expanded Community Advisory Panel (XCAP)
November 18, 2020, 3:30 pm
Summary – Regular Meeting (virtual, through Zoom)

1. Welcome and Roll Call

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

Absent:

2. Staff Updates

Philip Kamhi, Chief Transportation Official reported he had a meeting with Caltrain today and they shared under COVID the Palo Alto station has been the highest used station in their network. Some of the biggest usages are related to healthcare, employees and those seeking healthcare. Those are things that are very accessible through the Palo Alto station. Regarding Measure B, he didn't feel there was anything more to share than what he had previously. A lot of comments of concern were provided at the meetings by various agencies as well as comments similar to our other agencies.

Chair Naik explained for the public Measure B is the 2016 tax measure that would be used to fund grade separations. A percentage of that money was earmarked for BART and for grade separations, but the latest ten-year plan showed all the money going to BART and none coming for grade separations in the near term.

Mr. Kamhi informed everyone it wasn't just grade separation funding that was removed from the ten-year plan, but it was for the idea of getting the conversation started about other funding. VTA's idea was that there would be discussion and fill them in, but many commenters along with Palo Alto stated that there wasn't enough funding left after it was primarily provided to BART Phase 2. There was also some concern that in the resolution the funding initially planned in the measure was \$1.5 billion for BART Phase II and there was a cap of 25 percent of all the Measure B funding that was supposed to be allocated to BART Phase II. The proposal shown that was supposed to be just for illustrative purposes exceeded the 25 percent and was closer to \$2 billion than \$1.5 billion.

Chair Naik reported Supervisor Simitian seems quite involved.

Mr. Kamhi agreed and noted Supervisor Simitian provided a very good history lesson on that measure going back before 2016. In order to get support from all the cities, the polling stated that projects other than BART polled very well and BART polling wasn't one of the highest measures. That is scheduled to go before the Board as an information item on December 3.

Chair Naik advised she was at the Policy Advisory Committee Meeting. Even though it was an informational item, there was a unanimous decision by everyone there to refuse to accept the report. So, even though this is going as an informational item to the supervisors, part of the staff report will be that the Policy Advisory Committee refused to accept the report because they didn't think that was a believable starting scenario for anything basically.

Mr. Kamhi related as an information item, an interesting discussion was, can the Committee actually take action on a non-action item? They decided they could take action however they wanted to and it was under the Action Calendar, so they decided to reject the report.

XCAP Member Carrasco inquired about the downtown section and how to address not having that section in XCAP's report? He felt there should at least be a paragraph describing why that wasn't included.

Chair Naik clarified Mr. Kamhi was talking about Measure B and the VTA and asked if Member Carrasco meant the XCAP report should have a sentence about Palo Alto Avenue being moved to a different section and she thought that was in Chapter 2, in the Context Section. She affirmed on her master timeline she had the date at which the Council removed Palo Alto Avenue from XCAP's discussion and she would make a note to add that into Chapter 2.

XCAP Member Klein recollected there was a sentence say that was deliberately removed from XCAP's purview by the City Council.

3. Oral Communications

Keri Wagner had three comments. She first asked that viaduct not be put in the middle of the City because that would divide the City and nobody wants to live next to a viaduct. Second, there are options that don't require Eminent Domain and taking people's homes cannot be justified. Lastly, a separated bike/pedestrian crossing is needed in South Palo Alto and Matadero Creek would be a good place for it.

4. XCAP Member Updates and Working Group Updates

Chair Naik provided a document to share where the Group is currently. She and Member Klein need to start digging into the Executive Summary. The Introduction to Chapters 1 and 2 were edited at the last meeting. Chapter 3 has been worked on. She hoped to review the Discarded Alternatives worked on by Members Carrasco and Templeton. She wanted to look at the Safety Section worked on by Member Brail. The Churchill Section was being worked on by Members Shen and Cho and she asked for one more volunteer to help them. She, Members Reckdahl and Burton are working on the dissenting opinion for Churchill. She is also looking for one other member to help Members Reckdahl and Brail work on South Palo Alto.

XCAP Member Brail reported they have merged four documents into one, but he is looking for someone to consolidate the duplications of the center sections and work on the formatting.

Chair Naik advised as she reads this, she would like to know about each alternative, what it is, hear the comparing and contrasting comments and suggestion on making that alternative better. She also felt there should be a separate section on recommendations, so there could be some duplication. One section would be more directed towards policymakers with a list and reference pages.

XCAP Member Klein volunteered to work with Members Shen and Cho to work on the Churchill closure.

XCAP Member Reckdahl advised the timeline added by Chair Naik was very valuable, but it seemed like it should be in one of the earlier sections.

Chair Naik agreed and noted that would probably get moved. Discussion was held on placement of that timeline.

XCAP Member Burton offered to work on the South Palo Alto section.

Chair Naik indicated she hoped to get this done before year end. A draft of the Executive Summary should be turned in by next Monday, an updated version of Churchill by Members Klein, Shen and Cho and whatever can be completed by Members Reckdahl, Brain and Burton for South Palo Alto. She asked all members to read the Executive Summary and Churchill, and if time, start looking at South Palo Alto between the morning of November 30 and mid-day December 2. The idea is to edit and release as fast as possible so hopefully by December 16 the report should be close to final. There is a possibility of a meeting December 30, then go into January at which point this could be fully finalized.

XCAP Member asked for clarification regarding his previous Chapter 4.

Chair Naik that information was moved into the Chapters by Members Shen, Cho, Reckdahl and Brail. She clarified this would be due the Monday after Thanksgiving.

XCAP Member Reckdahl asked about the Brown Act. To reset the Brown Act pairings and not have a meeting, could this be published on the web and then if it's public knowledge, reset the pairings?

Chair Naik replied yes. Items would be turned in the Monday after Thanksgiving with two days to read Executive Summary and Churchill, then reset. If by Thursday of that week South Palo Alto had some new additional edits, the clock could be reset then. Then on Monday December 6, if there are more edits of any of the chapters, that could be reset, so as things become available others can edit.

Mr. Kamhi noted currently he scheduled the XCAP to deliver their report at the January 25 Council as a hold.

Chair Naik asked that he move that to February. Discussion was held regarding the presentation to Council.

5. Writing and Editing of Final Report

Safety Chapter

Chair Naik indicated the current version was already released and sent to Ms. Wilson.

XCAP Member Carrasco is bothered by the fence required if the train is on grade or in a trench, in the area between the fence on the west side of the Caltrain tracks and the home fences will become a no-man's land and become unsafe because it is hard to be policed. That issue will have to be resolved.

XCAP Member Brail remarked a recommendation concerning that could be put in the Safety Considerations.

XCAP Member Reckdahl asked who is responsible for the safety at the stations, Caltrain or the City?

XCAP Member Klein replied it might be the Sheriff.

Mr. Kamhi remarked the City will respond if it's a police call, but the Sheriff might have a contract with Caltrain.

XCAP Member Templeton thought the contents of this chapter was good, but wondered if it would be helpful to add a sentence at the beginning of the chapter explaining what this chapter is about.

This section was further discussed and recommendations for changes were made.

XCAP Member Brail suggesting creating a section for recommendations for the corridor-wide grade separation study.

Discarded Alternatives

Chair Naik remarked this section describes what was discarded before XCAP began, which included the City-wide tunnel, the simple underpass and the closure of Meadow.

XCAP Member Burton asked about the South Palo Tunnels and Palo Alto Avenue

Chair Naik explained this section covered ideas before XCAP began. The South Palo Alto tunnels are included in the section XCAP Members Brail and Reckdahl are working on. Palo Alto Avenue was removed from the study.

XCAP Member Klein advised the South Palo Alto tunnel was studied and unanimously rejected before XCAP began, and the concept for Palo Alto Avenue was removed from this study.

Members discussed this section and wording for changes.

Churchill Avenue

Chair Naik asked for comments from the Group regarding Section 3.2, Churchill Avenue.

XCAP Member Shen asked if the screen shots should be included in this report.

XCAP Member Brail commented on the Majority Decision. He would like to see some consideration of having the ability to make a very safe and pleasant experience for bikes and pedestrians in the area.

XCAP Member Templeton noted there were items from the bike/ped plan that would be required as part of the mitigation and these had been sidelined.

XCAP Member Klein suggested more information regarding the lowest cost option and construction time.

This section was discussed by Members.

Chair Naik advised during today's meeting the Discarded Alternatives and Safety Chapter were discussed so Members who worked on these can return with any further information they have by Monday, November 30 for the next meeting on December 2. She will share her timeline with everyone.

XCAP Member Carrasco reported on the closure, some Members were uncomfortable with exporting mitigations to other neighborhoods on the closure. While that may be the best option, he is still worried that traffic from Churchill now has to go through Professorville.

Chair Naik replied she and Members Burton and Reckdahl are writing the dissenting opinion and that should be available at the next meeting so everyone will have a chance to give their opinion on that.

Public Comment

None.

6. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 5:06 pm