

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

### **THIS PACKET INCLUDES:**

A compilation of emails (public comments, etc) submitted to the XCAP email box, [XCAP@CityofPaloAlto.org](mailto:XCAP@CityofPaloAlto.org), between **January 6, 2020 and January 13, 2021 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:** [Nadia Naik](#)  
**To:** [Expanded Community Advisory Panel; Wilson, Sarah](#)  
**Subject:** New letter from PAUSD  
**Date:** Monday, January 11, 2021 4:44:27 PM  
**Attachments:** [XCAP Letter Originally Sent December 8 .docx](#)

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Dear XCAP,

I just received a copy of a new letter from PAUSD that relates to our work.

Sarah, please attach this letter to the agenda as an informational item.

Thanks,  
Nadia



**PALO ALTO**  
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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December 7, 2020

Palo Alto City Council  
City Manager Ed Shikada  
250 Hamilton Ave.  
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Dear City Council and City Manager Shikada,

We understand XCAP has been continuing to work on the grade separation issue during COVID and will be providing their report to City Council soon. We appreciate their efforts. However, PAUSD, parents, and the community have been focused on contending with the COVID emergency and have been unable to provide adequate engagement or representation in this critical process.

Since our last letter to XCAP in February 2020, new alternatives have been considered by XCAP. Due primarily to the COVID pandemic and the unprecedented impact on schools and school families, our District and our stakeholders have not been able to meaningfully engage with these new ideas. Our understanding is that the XCAP is recommending closing Churchill which could have very significant impacts on access to Paly High School, the PAUSD bus yard at Paly, the District headquarters at 25 Churchill, and bikes, pedestrians, and vehicles to Paly and by parents driving to Walter Hays and Greene schools. While the report is not complete, from meeting notes on the XCAP's website they seem to indicate additional information is needed.

Our understanding is that XCAP will be making a recommendation to close Churchill, but will defer decisions on Meadow/Charleston. We would ask that in light of the limited participation from PAUSD and our various stakeholders, including PTAC, PABAC and PTA Traffic Safety Committee, and the PAUSD school community in general, the City should hold off on any decisions until additional information is provided on alternatives and until the COVID emergency has transitioned to a degree of normalcy that allows PAUSD and our stakeholders to participate fully in these important decisions.

Some of the issues and areas we believe our stakeholders will have strong interest in include:

- **Detailed review of bike/ped improvements:** If Churchill is ultimately closed, the rerouting of cars impacts streets like Embarcadero. While some traffic mitigations have been studied, we support further study to specifically understand the impacts to existing and potential future bike/ped paths - particularly the bike path along Embarcadero that could be impacted by the potential addition of a traffic signal at Embarcadero/High. In addition, further review of the proposed pedestrian overpass on the west side of the Embarcadero grade separation should be reviewed. And, any alternative at

Meadow/Charleston could potentially increase the number of cars along the streets requiring mitigations to ensure adequate bike/ped safety. Finally, potential diversion of auto traffic from Churchill to neighborhood streets that serve as school routes should also be considered.

- **Increasing potential Bike/Ped Only crossings:** Any bike/ped crossings that are completely separated from cars provide a safer experience. We support the study of additional potential crossings at additional locations, such as Seale/Alma and the vicinity of Loma Verde/Alma. If possible, these crossings could be a mitigation during construction to provide safe routes to school and could potentially provide additional ways to cross the tracks more safely. The need for safe, grade separated crossings of the rail corridor and Alma Expressway in South Palo Alto (where currently there are none) remains a critical issue that was highlighted in the 2012 Bike Plan and the 2012 Rail Corridor Study and the updated Comprehensive Plan.
- **Formal participation from PAUSD:** As the City moves forward with future iterations of the different grade separation designs, we would like to see active involvement of Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee (PABAC) and Safe Routes to School (PTAC Traffic Safety Committee and PTA councils for affected school sites). We should develop a formal method review and participation by PAUSD, and not rely on the informal mechanisms that are in place today. This helps ensure the City arrives at complete intersection designs for all students and families of the Palo Alto Unified School District.

We understand the City's desire to move forward with decisions relating to rail crossings. I'm sure you agree that changes of such magnitude are best done with the full engagement of impacted stakeholders. The pandemic unfortunately has made this impossible during the last several months. We appreciate your consideration of our request to slow the process to enable the District and our stakeholder groups to effectively engage and participate, so we can all support the final recommendations.

Sincerely,  
Donald B. Austin, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools