



CITY OF PALO ALTO CITY COUNCIL FINAL MINUTES

Special Meeting
January 21, 2020

The City Council of the City of Palo Alto met on this date in the Council Chambers at 6:02 P.M.

Present: Cormack, DuBois, Filseth, Fine, Kniss, Kou, Tanaka

Absent:

Study Session

1. Presentation and Review of Utilities Wildfire Mitigation Plan.

Dean Batchelor, Utilities Director reported a new State law required electric utilities to prepare a Wildfire Mitigation Plan (Plan) and to update it annually.

Debra Lloyd, Acting Assistant Utilities Director advised that Staff presented wildfire mitigation strategies to the Council in August 2018, and the Council determined an area of the City was at significant risk of a catastrophic wildfire caused by electric lines. The Plan must contain objectives and metrics, identify responsible personnel, and adopt preventative strategies and protocols for Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS). Some risk factors for wildfires were within Staff's control, and some were not.

Tom Ting, Engineering Manager indicated Plan objectives were drafted in collaboration with City departments. Staff increased the frequency of inspections, corrected any infractions and were exploring more stringent maintenance requirements. PSPS protocols were in place. A City weather station was installed at Montebello Reservoir. Staff was exploring an extension of fiber optic cable to improve communications in the Foothills, drafting a scope of work to rebuild the overhead electric line in the Foothills and enhancing construction standards for high fire threat areas. Utilities Staff supported the Fire Department's proposal for a controlled burn policy and plans. Plan metrics included no outages caused by overhead electric lines and minimal fire impacts due to overhead electric lines.

Andrew Dressel, Navigant Consulting, Inc. explained that State law required local publicly owned utilities to contract with a Qualified Independent Evaluator to review and assess the comprehensiveness of the Plan. Navigant Consulting had reviewed the Plan and found it to be comprehensive. The Utilities Department was proactive in implementing best practices.

FINAL MINUTES

Council Member Cormack asked if the Utilities Advisory Commission (UAC) commented on the Plan.

Ms. Lloyd responded no.

Council Member Cormack asked if there were any areas for which Staff was not preparing best practices.

Mr. Dressel indicated Staff had revised the Plan to incorporate Navigant's recommendations, and additional recommendations were going to be incorporated.

Council Member Cormack requested comment regarding PSPS protocols.

Mr. Ting explained that Staff practiced the established processes and outlined all communications.

Council Member Kou inquired regarding the requirements of Assembly Bill (AB) 1054

Mr. Dressel explained that AB 1054 created a Wildfire Safety Advisory Board to promulgate best practices for publicly owned utilities and to review and approve Plans for publicly owned utilities.

Council Member Kou asked if the City's body was housed within the Office of Emergency Services (OES) or the Utilities Department.

Ms. Lloyd clarified that the Wildfire Safety Advisory Board was a statewide body.

Mr. Dressel believed there was some connection between the Wildfire Safety Advisory Board and the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).

Council Member Kou inquired whether CPUC, the Utilities Department and the Fire Department coordinated increased frequency of inspections and maintenance.

Mr. Ting advised that the Utilities Department was responsible for inspections and maintenance.

Council Member Kou requested the current frequency of inspections.

Mr. Ting replied annually. Areas not considered high risk were inspected every three years. The high-risk area for Palo Alto was all property west of Highway 280.

FINAL MINUTES

Mr. Dressel noted inspections were performed prior to the beginning of fire season in June.

Council Member Kou asked if rules and responsibilities was implemented.

Mr. Ting responded yes.

Council Member Kou asked if Fire Station 8 was manned during fire season only.

Geo Blackshire, Fire Chief related that Fire Station 8 was staffed with two to five personnel on red-flag days. Personnel patrolled the area and coordinated with area agencies regarding activities and attendance in Foothills Park.

Council Member Kou requested the number of Firefighter/Paramedic positions in the City and the number on-duty at any given time.

Chief Blackshire answered 86 total positions and 24 Firefighter/Paramedics on duty during a shift. Not all personnel responded to a fire in the Foothills because they had to respond to emergencies in other parts of the City.

Council Member Kou inquired regarding the process to notify residents in the Foothills of an evacuation.

Chief Blackshire indicated notifications would be issued via Alert SCC, Nextdoor, the Police Department's Nixle software and social media platforms.

Council Member Kou asked if there was a notification system that was not dependent on the internet.

Chief Blackshire answered no.

Council Member Kou asked if Staff had plans for a backup system.

Chief Blackshire reported agencies across the County were exploring options.

Council Member Kou asked if the Division of Urban Forestry mentioned in the Plan was the City's Division of Urban Forestry.

Mr. Ting replied yes.

Council Member Kou requested the number of personnel in the Urban Forestry Division.

Mr. Ting did not know.

FINAL MINUTES

Council Member Kou asked if the Urban Forestry Division inspected trees and determined which needed trimming.

Mr. Ting reported the Urban Forestry Division identified areas needing trimming and brought in a contractor to do the trimming.

Council Member Kou asked if PG&E coordinated its Wildfire Mitigation Plan with the Fire Department.

Ms. Lloyd explained that PG&E routinely communicated with Offices of Emergency Services throughout the County. Utilities Staff met with PG&E representatives to discuss communications between PG&E and the Utilities Department. Utilities Staff monitored potential emergency situations and PG&E communications but made an independent decision regarding actions to be taken in the Foothills.

Council Member Kou inquired about methods for Staff to learn of PG&E decisions.

Ms. Lloyd clarified that PG&E communicated with agencies through non-public means.

Council Member Kou inquired regarding exercises or drills to test the Plan.

Ms. Lloyd explained that the Plan focused on actions the Utilities Department would take in the event of a wildfire.

Ed Shikada, City Manager added that the Plan focused on minimizing the risk of electric lines igniting a wildfire.

Council Member Filseth understood the Plan focused on the Utilities Department's compliance with State laws and on minimizing the risk of igniting wildfires. He inquired regarding a process to determine the level of risk for Foothills residents.

Ms. Lloyd reported the Plan focused on reducing the risk of equipment causing a wildfire. As a publicly owned utility, the Utilities Department had collaborated closely with the Fire Department, OES and the Urban Forestry Division. Utilities Staff also participated in activities of the CPUC and the California Energy Commission (CEC).

Council Member Filseth asked if agencies in surrounding jurisdictions had prepared Wildfire Mitigation Plans.

Ms. Lloyd replied yes. State laws required all utilities to prepare Wildfire Mitigation Plans.

FINAL MINUTES

Council Member Filseth reiterated that the Utilities Department had determined there was some risk of equipment causing a wildfire in the Foothills and developed a Plan. Next, Navigant evaluated the Plan.

Council Member Kniss inquired regarding lessons learned from the wildfires in Australia.

Ms. Lloyd reported Staff learned from industry best practices and actions taken by other utilities.

Council Member Kniss suggested the Plan offered good practices but not one solution.

Ms. Lloyd related that Staff had learned from PG&E's communication mistakes.

Mayor Fine asked if there was an examination of the potential of the City reducing service levels to certain areas in the fire zones or prohibiting development in the fire zones.

Mr. Ting answered no.

Ms. Lloyd clarified that the willingness to implement PSPS protocols could be considered a reduction in services. In response to Council Member Kou's question regarding the number of Urban Forestry Staff, the number of Staff is not an issue because Staff across the City coordinate their efforts to comply with requirements.

Oral Communications

Sheryl Klein, Palo Alto Housing suggested the Council consider a height limit greater than 50 feet, streamlining the approval process and other tools to increase the supply of affordable housing.

Karen Pauls invited the public to attend the Community Partnership Awards on February 6, 2020.

Melanie Grondel addressed the need for a community grocery in the College Terrace neighborhood. College Terrace Centre's landlord had not contributed to the market's success.

Susan Cole advised that the lack of a grocery in College Terrace Centre was a concern for residents of Evergreen Park. She urged the City to impose fines if the market closed.

Michael Forster remarked that the College Terrace Centre owners had not made a good faith effort to support a market.

FINAL MINUTES

Rita Vrhel stated Mayor Fine's letter regarding Senate Bill (SB) 50 appeared to represent the City of Palo Alto, the Mayor's Office and the City Council, but the letter expressed a personal opinion.

Peter Maresca supported SB 50 and favored multi-unit housing over large single-family homes. He urged the Council to support amended SB 50.

Kathy Jordan disagreed with comments regarding SB 50. Electrification of Caltrain was not necessarily going to lead to increased train service.

Aram James felt SB 50 was critical, and a discussion of SB 50 and reparations was good. He requested the Council reexamine the need for Tasers in light of evidence that Tasers were far more dangerous than originally thought.

Per Maresca thanked the Council for supporting the Wilton Court Affordable Housing Project.

Kristen Anderson urged the Council to enforce the \$2,000 per day fine for the absence of a market in College Terrace Centre.

Herb Borock did not find a permit for a market at College Terrace Centre. If there was not a legally operated market at the site, every day had to be assessed for a fine.

Mayor Fine requested an approximate date for the Council to receive an update regarding College Terrace Centre.

Ed Shikada, City Manager indicated the Council would discuss an amendment to the Fee Schedule on February 10, 2020.

Action Items

2. Connecting Palo Alto Rail Grade Separation: A) Receive an Update and Recommendation From the Expanded Community Advisory Panel (XCAP), and Potential Modification of the List of Grade Separation Alternatives to add up to Three Concepts (Additional Alternatives for Study) at the Churchill, Charleston, and Meadow Grade Crossings; and B) Provide Direction to Staff Regarding Next Steps Including a Consultant Contract Amendment for Scope, Budget, and Schedule Modifications.

Chantal Cotton Gaines, Assistant to the City Manager reported the Council directed the Expanded Community Advisory Panel (XCAP) to provide regular updates, to evaluate the seven existing grade separation alternatives, and to suggest new alternatives. The Council received XCAP updates on October 28 and December 9, 2019. The cost, timeframe, constructability, and practicality

FINAL MINUTES

of new alternatives had not been determined. Should the Council direct Staff to proceed with analysis of one, two, or all of the new alternatives, Staff then returned to the Council with revisions to the Work Plan and the schedule and with contract and budget amendments.

Nadia Naik, XCAP Chair advised that five of six new alternatives passed an initial review. After discussion, the XCAP recommended three of the five alternatives for additional study. The existing alternatives were not great, and the community attempted to provide better alternatives with the six new alternatives.

Keith Reckdahl, XCAP Member indicated six of the seven alternatives required relocation of the Caltrain tracks. He summarized the pros and cons of the existing alternatives. The consulting civil engineers recommended relocating roadways because roads were more pliable and subject to less regulatory compliance. Members of the community proposed a constant flow underpass for Charleston/Meadow, a partial underpass at Churchill and to rethink Embarcadero. For the constant flow underpass, Charleston had to be separated two-way bike/pedestrian lane and traffic lanes that pass beneath Alma and the tracks and access Alma. The same configuration was a possibility for Meadow. This concept improved traffic flow and bicycle/pedestrian safety and did not utilize shoefly tracks.

Ms. Naik cautioned Council Members that the renderings were conceptual and did not accurately depict the existing conditions.

Mr. Reckdahl explained that all alternatives had shortcomings. The goal was to find the alternative where the community tolerated the shortcomings. The Churchill partial underpass was to have one lane in each direction at the surface. A separate tunnel for bikes at Seale or Kellogg was needed during construction of the underpass. The Embarcadero concept proposed moving the viaduct from Churchill to Embarcadero to improve traffic flow.

Ms. Naik related that XCAP would be deliberating rapidly in order to meet the April 30, 2020 deadline. Caltrain representatives were going to attend the January 29, 2020 XCAP meeting. An attorney was going to address eminent domain at the February 5, 2020 meeting.

Mayor Fine noted the Council had two At-Places Memos.

Council Member Filseth requested the reasons XCAP believed a Charleston underpass could be built without raising the tracks.

FINAL MINUTES

Ms. Naik explained that the 2014 underpass responded to plans for High Speed Rail and caused a lot of property damage. No one understood that the concept had more traffic lanes than the existing condition and a very thick rail bridge.

Philip Kamhi, Chief Transportation Official reported the three new concepts included aspirational details and were based on currently known information. The consultant believed the constant flow underpass would have duration and construction impacts, increase traffic through residential neighborhoods, and have considerable property impacts. The partial underpass was likely going to require property takings and eliminate traffic movements. The roundabout on Embarcadero was likely to require two traffic lanes.

Council Member Filseth understood Mr. Kamhi was not certain whether shoefly tracks could be eliminated at the Charleston/Meadow crossing.

Mr. Kamhi indicated foregoing shoefly tracks was not a guarantee at the current time.

Council Member Kou asked if the Stanford roundabout had one or two lanes.

Mr. Kamhi believed it had two lanes.

Council Member Kou inquired whether the Churchill concept did not go through Alma.

Ms. Naik answered correct. The concepts presented to the Council were the concepts presented to XCAP. XCAP had not made any corrections or additions to the concepts.

Council Member Kniss inquired about the ability to depress Charleston sufficiently for the concept to be feasible.

Ms. Naik believed it could be achieved. The questions were the footprint of the depression and the traffic speed. The concept relied on a very thin rail bridge, two traffic lanes, and the bike/pedestrian tunnel.

Council Member Kniss viewed the San Carlos underpass as unattractive and a division in the community. She suggested the community drive around the region to observe the variety of underpasses.

Council took a break at 8:03 P.M. and returned at 8:11 P.M.

Michael Chacon, speaking for Mary Chacon, Dexter Girton, Barbara Hazlett, Rachel Kellerman, Sara Girton and Tom Kellerman requested a meeting with the traffic consultant to discuss the Traffic Study and Plan. Closing Churchill bifurcated Palo Alto, isolated Castilleja residents and significantly impacted

FINAL MINUTES

Embarcadero. A viaduct at Churchill eliminated residents' privacy and was financially untenable. The Traffic Study needed to look forward 20 years rather than ten years. The road underpass at Churchill improved safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. Westbound traffic on Churchill was not able to turn left onto Alma, and traffic on Churchill was not able to travel across Alma. An underpass was going to cost significantly less than a viaduct, it eliminated elevation of the University Avenue train station and it did not require eminent domain proceedings. Mr. Chacon shared his revisions regarding the Churchill Underpass Concept.

Michael Price advised that the goals of the Churchill Underpass Concept were to eliminate property takings, maintain the location of train tracks and significantly improve bicycle/pedestrian safety. Many of the construction costs had already been calculated.

Young-Jeh Oh supported closure of Churchill Avenue because it would cost little and would not preclude future changes. The Churchill Underpass Concept was too complex, cumbersome and costly.

Elizabeth Alexis commented that the Charleston underpass concept had the potential for significant savings in both money and construction time. The concept was worth exploring.

Eduardo Llach supported closure of Churchill to eliminate through-traffic and increase bicycle and pedestrian safety.

Teri Llach opposed an underpass at Churchill because it would significantly increase traffic on Churchill.

Jason Stinson did not understand the recommendation to evaluate concepts for Churchill when closure would be considerably less expensive.

Jason Matlof related that all seven alternatives would experience improvement in traffic on a net basis even with the closure of Churchill. The matrix of criteria needed to be updated.

David Shen requested the Council update the matrix with new information so that alternatives could be assessed accurately.

Stephen Rosenblum believed closing Churchill would increase traffic on nearby streets. The viaduct concept was going to spread the costs and benefits across all neighborhoods.

Mark Lawrence indicated Churchill was an arterial street and closing it would further divide the City.

FINAL MINUTES

David Kennedy related that closing a rail crossing would contradict the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. A good design with some property acquisition could reduce construction costs. The Council needed to direct XCAP to study an underpass and a hybrid at Churchill.

Penny Ellson recommended further study of the constant flow underpass concept because it could greatly reduce construction time and generate more community consensus.

Rob Levitsky shared traffic counts he conducted during rush hour that morning and the prior Friday at Churchill and Alma. The Churchill underpass concept accommodated most of the traffic on Churchill. The limitations of the concept appeared to be minor.

Nelson Ng expressed concern regarding the impacts of closing Churchill on Embarcadero traffic and property acquisitions.

Susan Newman requested the Council not close Churchill and review the accuracy of the Traffic Study.

Bob Moss indicated the constant flow underpass at Charleston and Meadow was the logical choice. Closing Churchill significantly impacted traffic throughout North Palo Alto.

Roland Lebrun stated the South Palo Alto tunnel with freight at grade was designed to be constructed entirely within the Caltrain right-of-way, which eliminated impacts on creeks, Alma, Meadow and Charleston during construction.

Herb Borock reiterated his statements that AECOM had a conflict of interest because of contracts with Caltrain and High Speed Rail. He thought a person should not assume an increase in the number of Caltrain trains per hour because projections indicated Caltrain would operate at a multimillion-dollar deficit in 2040. Land developers and large employers benefited from grade separations, and they should pay for them.

Jim Silver supported the constant flow underpass concept and hoped the Council would study it in detail.

Mayor Fine reported an XCAP meeting was scheduled for the following day, Word on the Street meetings were upcoming and three Town Halls were planned for February and March, 2020.

Ed Shikada, City Manager recognized the complexity of the topic and the importance of engaging the community. Challenges for the Council and the

FINAL MINUTES

community were: the multiyear process to scope the projects; Staff's ability to deliver work product; and regulatory agency approvals.

Mayor Fine requested cost and time estimates for Council acceptance of one of the new concepts for further study.

Ms. Cotton Gaines indicated the cost estimate for engineering work was approximately \$65,000 for each concept. The worst-case scenario for analysis of concepts was four months.

Council Member Kniss favored the Constant Flow Underpass concept for Charleston and Meadow because she could visualize the completed project.

MOTION: Council Member Kniss moved, seconded by Council Member Cormack to direct Staff to move forward with exploring the "Constant Flow Underpass for Charleston and Meadow" concept.

Council Member Cormack emphasized that the new concepts fixed major flaws in the existing alternatives and attempted not to move the railroad. She inquired regarding the number of lanes at the light on Charleston.

Mr. Kamhi did not know.

Council Member Cormack expressed concern about the amount of space around Meadow for this concept.

Vice Mayor DuBois wanted to see the concept with two lanes and one lane in each direction, the roundabout in different locations and the bike lane crossover at Wilkie Way. One lane in each direction was more suitable for Meadow. Placing the bike lane on one side of the roadway created space for the roundabout. He suggested the Council explore restrictions to large trucks on some of the streets such that truck traffic was directed to larger streets. He was pleased to see the number of community members in attendance and appreciated the XCAP proposing concepts with reasonable cost estimates.

Council Member Filseth indicated the promise of this concept was not moving the train tracks. The concept was basically an underpass that allowed access to westbound Charleston or Meadow. The questions for the concept were: was it a possibility to be built without moving the tracks; would the roundabout fit; would the cost be considerably lower than the hybrid alternative; and was it realistic. He inquired whether study of the concept would answer the questions.

Mr. Shikada replied possibly not. Based on the consultant's experience, the decision not to use shoefly tracks was usually made at a later stage of design.

FINAL MINUTES

Council Member Filseth assumed Caltrain would have few concerns with the concept because it did not relocate the tracks.

Mr. Shikada explained that the question was the level of assurance Caltrain needed to allow construction under the tracks while trains continued to operate.

Council Member Filseth asked if some insight into the question could be gained after a few months of study.

Mr. Shikada advised that Staff would explore the question and assess risk versus reward for the concept.

Council Member Kou noted the concept would not impact creeks and would greatly improve safety for bicycles and pedestrians. She wanted to see professional renderings of the concept at both Charleston and Meadow.

Mayor Fine agreed that the concept was logical but questioned whether the community could embrace the constant flow concept. The concept relocated crossing movements from the grade separation area and into a roundabout. The relocation simplified parameters of the design but complicated traffic movements. He expressed concern that drivers may not understand how to navigate through and around the underpass. He inquired regarding the bike lane on the south side of Charleston.

Ms. Naik reported the concept included a bike lane on the west side but not the east side of Charleston, and the reverse was proposed for Meadow.

Mayor Fine felt any shift in the tracks could negatively affect acceptance of the concept. The concept potentially had significant construction impacts and shifted more traffic to local neighborhoods. He inquired whether the concept was more functional at Charleston than at Meadow.

Mr. Kamhi related that AECOM analyzed the concept at Charleston only and Charleston was a wider roadway than Meadow.

Mayor Fine asked if XCAP proposed the concept for both Charleston and Meadow.

Ms. Naik answered yes. The impacts were different because houses along Charleston faced into the circles. Caltrain was interested in construction techniques that did not move the tracks.

Mayor Fine asked if AECOM would conduct one or two analyses of the concept.

Mr. Kamhi did not know.

FINAL MINUTES

Mayor Fine suggested approving the concept could mean adding two alternatives when the goal was to reduce the number of alternatives.

Mr. Shikada clarified that for purpose of discussion, the concept would be considered one alternative.

Vice Mayor DuBois did not believe the elimination of shoefly tracks was the only reason to consider the concept. The concept minimized changes because it did not extend up as the hybrid did. In addition, the concept reduced noise impacts. He hoped the analysis would provide sufficient information for the community to understand the different geometries for Charleston and Meadow.

MOTION PASSED: 7-0

Mr. Shikada reported Staff would work with AECOM to incorporate the concept into the Work Plan. Staff was to work with XCAP to determine the number and types of renderings and animations needed for the concept.

Council Member Kniss requested Staff include Ms. Alexis in design discussions.

Mayor Fine related that issues around T-intersections and bicycle safety had been resolved. The options for Churchill were extremely limited, but the underpass concept was worthy of exploration. He asked if the roads on either side were considered frontage or through roads.

Ms. Naik replied yes. Mr. Price's concept included a single lane at grade, but AECOM thought it might be two lanes.

Mayor Fine added that there would be two lanes at grade and one left turn-lane beneath the tracks. He asked if trucks could utilize the underpass.

Mr. Kamhi advised that AECOM had analyzed turning movements for school buses and trucks.

MOTION: Mayor Fine moved, seconded by Council Member Kniss to direct Staff to move forward with exploring the "Churchill Partial Underpass" concept.

Mayor Fine believed the concept provided a potential hybrid option that preserved the most intensive and important traffic movements and removed the less used movements. The concept limited property takings and preserved bicycle and pedestrian traffic.

FINAL MINUTES

Council Member Kniss was not as enthusiastic about the underpass concept because she could not visualize it. She encouraged Staff and the XCAP to provide animations of the concepts.

Council Member Filseth stated the motivation for considering an alternative other than closure of Churchill was the impact on Embarcadero. He inquired whether Staff felt a significant reconstruction of the Embarcadero underpass would be necessary in the next 30 years regardless of changes to the Churchill crossing.

Mr. Shikada did not believe Staff had reached that conclusion. At some point, the bridge over Alma needed work.

Council Member Cormack remarked that the underpass was a clever way to mitigate concerns. AECOM's assessment that the concept would shift more traffic to residential streets was a concern. The creation of a wall, turning left prior to the wall and traffic speeds were concerns. Mr. Reckdahl had mentioned moving the bike/pedestrian crossing. She remarked that signals could be tricky.

Vice Mayor DuBois liked the idea of depressing two lanes on Alma, and the signals on Alma could create a residential street. He continued that bikes could bunch at the T-intersection and the bridge over the tracks; therefore, a crossing at Seale or removing the bike lane should be analyzed. He was interested in learning whether the concept increased traffic.

Council Member Kou asked if it was possible to view the concept comprehensively, including at Seale and Kellogg.

Mr. Kamhi advised that the concept could include options for crossings. There was mention of a temporary crossing at Seale so that a crossing would be available during construction at Churchill.

Ms. Naik clarified that the 2014 Rail Corridor Study identified potential new bike/pedestrian crossings at Loma Verde, Seale and Kellogg. XCAP looked at two crossings for the closure of Churchill.

Council Member Kou wanted to view concepts comprehensively and explore connectivity. She proposed amending the Motion to add exploration of east-west connections at Seale and Kellogg.

Mayor Fine asked how Staff was considering bicycle connectivity.

FINAL MINUTES

Mr. Kamhi reported an update of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan would be an opportunity to discuss connections. Bicycle and pedestrian connections needed to be considered holistically across the City.

Council Member Kou requested a timeframe for updating the Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan.

Mr. Kamhi suggested an update could begin in a year or so.

Ms. Naik advised that discussion of a crossing at Seale had occurred, but XCAP did not know why the crossing was no longer under consideration. XCAP was then given two options for crossings at Churchill only.

Mayor Fine asked Staff to provide an update of bike connectivity issues at Churchill.

MOTION PASSED: 7-0

Council Member Kniss believed the Embarcadero concept would be complicated and expensive. Construction phasing and impacts were potentially a fatal flaw for the concept; the concept may not be eligible for Measure B funding.

MOTION: Council Member Kniss moved, seconded by Council Member Filseth not to re-think Embarcadero at Alma.

Council Member Kniss indicated the concept seemed to have far more glitches than the previous two concepts. This concept was a practical and appealing solution at some future time.

Council Member Filseth noted the concept was elegant and extremely aspirational. Staff's approach to reconfiguring Embarcadero appeared to be workable, but a reconfiguration may not be needed.

Council Member Kou recalled comments that the Alma overpass was reaching the end of its life.

Mr. Kamhi did not know that the overpass was at the end of its life or whether it needed upgrades. The overpass may be eligible for designation as a historic structure.

Council Member Kou asked if grants were available to upgrade and seismically retrofit a historic overpass.

Mr. Kamhi thought there may be grants.

FINAL MINUTES

Council Member Kou inquired whether previous plans for bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements in the Emerson, Kingsley and El Camino areas were factors in relieving traffic congestion on Embarcadero.

Mr. Kamhi indicated the Rail Plan was considering mitigations and options for bicycle and pedestrian access.

Vice Mayor DuBois shared concerns about the cost and construction impacts of the large roundabout. Churchill and Embarcadero were related. He requested Staff's thoughts about temporarily closing Churchill.

Mr. Shikada reported Staff had discussed phasing closure of Churchill. A temporary closure eliminated a bicycle and pedestrian crossing; Embarcadero may need modifications prior to a test closure of Churchill. Staff and AECOM were able to develop some options for sequencing work in the area so that access and safety were maintained.

Vice Mayor DuBois requested the plan for Embarcadero.

Mr. Shikada explained that plans for bicycle infrastructure along Embarcadero to El Camino Real were retained in the concept. Separated bicycle and pedestrian crossings conflicted with a second left turn-lane and other modifications. Changes to the bike route on Embarcadero were able to proceed.

Vice Mayor DuBois asked if changes to Embarcadero would be phased in based on decisions about grade crossings.

Mr. Shikada clarified that changes could wait for grade crossing decisions, but they could proceed independent of crossing decisions.

Vice Mayor DuBois wished to ensure that improvements to Embarcadero were considered.

Council Member Filseth understood the Motion directed no further analysis of option 3.

Council Member Cormack indicated the concept was not navigable for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Council Member Tanaka requested Mr. Carrasco share his vision.

Tony Carrasco reported a hybrid version included the bridges and additional roadways. The hybrid version worked and was less expensive than the original version.

FINAL MINUTES

Council Member Tanaka expressed concern that delaying the concept could preclude options in the future.

Mayor Fine concurred with prior comments. Perhaps the Council was able to schedule a Study Session or forum to consider improvements for Embarcadero absent grade separation issues.

MOTION PASSED: 7-0

Mr. Shikada recommended the Council continue Agenda Items concerning the Housing Work Plan and the City Auditor due to time constraints. He thought the Council may wish to accept public testimony on the two items.

MOTION: Council Member Kniss moved, seconded by Vice Mayor DuBois to continue Agenda Item Number 4, "Council Appointed Officers Committee Recommendation That Council Discuss ..." to February 24, 2020.

MOTION PASSED: 7-0

Council Member Cormack proposed a record of the decision-making process so that members of the community could learn about grade separations and participate in community engagement.

Vice Mayor DuBois remarked that adding two alternatives could extend the process past April, 2020.

MOTION: Vice Mayor DuBois moved, seconded by XXX to ask the XCAP to eliminate options.

Mayor Fine requested XCAP's opinion of accomplishing Vice Mayor DuBois' proposal.

Ms. Naik reported XCAP may need to extend the April 30, 2020 deadline because it would need AECOM's analyses of the two new alternatives. Theoretically, XCAP was able to reduce the number of alternatives and a few weeks later make its final recommendations. XCAP needed to complete its work, deliberate on the alternatives to eliminate and then deliberate on final recommendations.

Mayor Fine interpreted Ms. Naik's response as eliminating alternatives would not be possible. He encouraged XCAP to consider deleting alternatives sooner rather than later.

Vice Mayor DuBois requested XCAP return to the Council with an update of choices prior to XCAP's final recommendations.

FINAL MINUTES

Ms. Naik asked if the Council would provide some direction with respect to a range for costs so that XCAP could factor cost into its decisions.

Vice Mayor DuBois did not believe the Council would provide that direction any time soon.

Mayor Fine noted cost was a criterium and withdrew his second.

Mr. Shikada expressed concern about the difficulty of eliminating alternatives until the analyses of the new alternatives were complete. If existing alternatives could not be eliminated on their own merits, no decision was to be made.

Ms. Naik clarified that XCAP would have to make its decision in early April, 2020 in order to write and submit its report by the end of April, 2020. XCAP had to eliminate existing alternatives, review analyses of the new alternatives and then determine a final recommendation. With few meetings and a slow process, XCAP had difficulty deliberating fully or submitting a thorough recommendation by April 30, 2020.

Mr. Shikada suggested an XCAP subcommittee apply the criteria to the existing alternatives in an attempt to eliminate alternatives.

Larry Klein urged the Council not to change XCAP's Work Plan. He did not see an advantage in eliminating alternatives.

Vice Mayor DuBois withdrew his Motion. Another update from XCAP prior to the final recommendation was useful.

MOTION FAILED DUE TO THE LACK OF A SECOND

Mr. Klein commented that if the upcoming community meetings were to be meaningful, the Council should not eliminate alternatives prior to the meetings.

Mr. Shikada noted three Town Halls and Word on the Street sessions in February and March, 2020.

Mayor Fine asked the XCAP to begin stack ranking alternatives when possible.

Council Member Kou asked if an XCAP meeting with AECOM to discuss the Council's comments would be helpful.

Ms. Naik concurred with more people reviewing the alternatives. XCAP's technical working group or another subcommittee were able to begin reviewing alternatives.

FINAL MINUTES

Council Member Filseth did not believe eliminating alternatives would be productive at the current time.

Ms. Naik noted the criteria were developed in September 2017, and XCAP was going to need some direction regarding the criteria.

~~3. Update and Discussion of the Planning and Development Services Housing Work Plan and Direction to Modify or Direct new Assignments Related to Housing and Other Department Assignments.~~

Council Member Kniss suggested the Council continue the item to a date in the next few weeks.

Beth Minor, City Clerk reviewed upcoming Agendas and suggested a date of March 2, 2020.

MOTION: Council Member Kniss moved, seconded by Council Member Filseth to continue Agenda Item Number 3, "Update and Discussion of the Planning and Development Services Housing Work Plan ..." to a future date.

Council Member Cormack asked if there were any items within the Work Plan that were urgent.

Jonathan Lait, Planning and Development Services indicated the Staff Report listed the items of concern.

MOTION PASSED: 7-0

~~4. Council Appointed Officers Committee Recommendation That Council Discuss and Accept the City Auditor's Office Organizational Study Report and Provide Direction on Next Steps.~~

Council Member Kniss announced she was reelected to the Bay Area Air Quality Management District Board.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 10:26 P.M. with a special acknowledgement for the continued safety and enhanced quality of life for Palo Alto residents.