



CITY COUNCIL RAIL COMMITTEE FINAL MINUTES

Special Meeting
October 17, 2018

Council Member Fine called the meeting to order at 8:07 A.M. in the Council Chambers, 250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto, California.

Present: Fine, Kou, Scharff, Wolbach arrived at 8:10 A.M.

Absent:

Oral Communications

Nadia Naik reported that in terms of electrification if there was an exemption of an 18-foot clearance for the historic bridge by the El Palo Alto Tree, then there could be an 18-foot clearance along the whole train corridor instead of doing the full 24 ½-feet that was being required.

Agenda Items

1. Connecting Palo Alto Rail Program: Schedule Update and Upcoming Major Milestones for Community Outreach and Technical Analysis of Seven Remaining Railroad Grade Separation Ideas.

Rob De Geus, Deputy City Manager introduced a new Staff member, Jarret Mullen, who would be helping with the rail project going forward. He specified that the primary topic for the Agenda Item was to discuss the Rail Committee's (Committee) schedule for the next 4-months. Staff had drafted a letter under the direction of Chair Wolbach and that was supplied to the Committee for discussion and review.

Etty Mercurio, Apex Strategies (AECOM) explained that she would be walking through the current Work Plan that would be covering the next 4-month's schedule. In terms of the schedule, there was a Citizen Advisory Panel (CAP) meeting that took place in the week prior to the Committee's meeting. The CAP discussed the current Work Plan, traffic scope, discussion on the financial aspect of the project, and reviewed an alternatives update. During the month of October 2018, the goals were to work on the traffic data

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collection, prepare pedestrian and bicycle exhibits, meet with stakeholders, evaluate construction issues, develop an evaluation matrix, begin construction cost estimations, and prepare 3D visuals for the Committee, City Council (Council), and the public. For November 2018 there was to be another CAP meeting scheduled for November 7, 2018. There would be another Committee meeting to discuss the overall project status, work plan, and freight. Then on November 28, 2018, there was to be another community meeting. November 2018 engineering activities included completing the traffic data collection, begin a traffic analysis to evaluate closures, meet with stakeholders, and several other objectives. For December 2018 there was a Council meeting scheduled to discuss what had been happening in the past few months. For engineering objectives in December 2018, there was a plan to continue traffic analysis for closures, continue evaluating costs, construction issues, financing for the project, update the alternative materials based on Council's feedback and continue to prepare the 3D visuals. For January 2019 another Cap meeting was scheduled for January 9, 2019, another Committee meeting was to be determined, and then a community meeting on January 23, 2019. For engineering objects to be done in January 2019 was to complete the engineering analysis, the traffic analysis, and the construction costs and update the 3D visuals. For February 2019 there was a tentative Council meeting scheduled to update the Council on what had been going on so far. In terms of an alternative update, Palo Alto Avenue had two options; closure, or a road under rail hybrid. Churchill Avenue was having an analysis done for the possible closure of that crossing. Meadow Drive and Charleston Road had the road under rail hybrid, the road over rail trench, and a viaduct alternative. Still on the table was a Citywide road over rail tunnel alternative.

Mr. De Geus reported that the goal was to have a preferred alternative for all grade crossings by the end of 2018. That was not going to happen but Staff was confident that a preferred alternative would be achieved in the first couple months of 2019. He continued to state that because of all the constraints in terms of the Palo Alto Avenue crossing, he suggested that it may be smarter to think about Palo Alto Avenue as a Coordinated Area plan including University and downtown.

David Herzl voiced that he preferred the trench alternative for the East Meadow and Charleston grade separation.

Megan Kanhe commented that in June of 2018 the Council passed a motion

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stating that Staff would study additional options for addressing traffic on the Embarcadero Underpass. She stated that listening to the CAP meetings, that was not included in the scope of work and she wanted some clarification on why that was removed.

Lee Langhammer Law voiced her support for the trench or any lowered rail alternatives for the Charleston and Meadow crossing and she opposed all raised rail options. She announced that over 600 community members had signed a petition stating they would prefer a trench as well in South Palo Alto.

Jagdish Pamnani confirmed that he also preferred the trench alternative for Charleston and Meadow. He voiced that it was important that the Council receive the approval from Caltrain for a 2 percent grade and that should be the top priority. Also, to receive the approval for a clearance of 18.5-feet instead of the required 24.5 foot clearance. He wanted the Committee to consider having a tunnel with electrification and then running a single freight train track on top.

David Shen stated he was representing the North Old Palo Alto Group and he was also a member of the CAP. He stated that a short trench for Meadow and Charleston were the preferred method among North Old Palo Alto community members. He stated he agreed with a previous speaker that coming to a resolution on 2 percent grade and height clearance was critical. He advocated for former Chief Transportation Officer Josh Mello's ideas surrounding the reconstruction of the Embarcadero Underpass. He was concerned that the City's grade crossing construction work would not match up with Caltrain's project so he urged the Committee to speed up the process.

Ellen Hartog affirmed that she was not in support of any raised rail alternatives for Charleston and Meadow and she strongly supported the trench alternative. She also agreed that 2 percent grade and clearance heights needed to be confirmed.

Arthur Keller disclosed his frustration with not knowing if 2 percent was acceptable or if an 18.5-foot height clearance was acceptable. He was frustrated with the way the City was handling representation in terms of Caltrain's electrification project. He wanted to consolidate the raise rail alternatives for Meadow and Charleston and add a south Palo Alto passenger train tunnel with one track for freight.

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San-Min Lee declared he supported a trench/tunnel alternative for Charleston and Meadow. He was concerned about the safety of his kids and homeless people camping out under the tracks. Also, he was concerned about noise from any raised rail alternative.

Davina Brown wanted to see the train put into a trench.

Joan Holtzman explained that her primary concern was that the City had not received approval from Caltrain for 2 percent grade and the height limit.

Amie Neff disclosed that she wants some trees or people put onto the design boards so that the community could compare height and size of the train alternatives. She was frustrated that the City had not achieved permission to do a 2 percent grade and the 18.5-foot height limit. She wanted more information on who would own the space under the train tracks if they were put on a viaduct. She also wanted the option for a shallow tunnel between San Antonio and California Avenue to be put back on the list of preferred alternatives.

Parag Patkar suggested that the Committee merge the raised rail options for the South Palo Alto intersections.

Stephen Rosenblum announced that a deep bore tunnel Citywide and viaduct alternative were the best options. He voiced concern that the current process was dividing the City and pitting them against one another.

Nadia Naik advised that the term City-wide tunnel should be changed because the tunnel would start after Embarcadero and would come up before San Antonio. She explained that there was not an option for a short, shallow tunnel in Palo Alto on the preferred alternatives list. She was concerned that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) had not met with AECOM yet. She was frustrated that the City did not have a lobbyist for the project and she suggested using Street Light Data when collecting traffic data.

Khurshid Gandhi agreed with the previous speakers about negotiating with Caltrain on the 2 percent grade and 18.5-foot height limit. She was in support of burying the railroad and did not want to see any overhead rail alternatives.

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Keith Reckdahl voiced his frustration about not having the confirmation from Caltrain on the 2 percent grade and the height limit. He suggested adding one or two more trains to help cut costs instead of making the tunnel or viaducts larger.

Penny Ellson commented that the schedule for upcoming meetings did not make sense and many people would be out of town for November and December. She wanted Staff and AECOM to really study and investigate safe routes to school.

Steve Jennings stated that he agreed with all the previous speakers' comments.

Anjan Ghose announced that he agreed with previous speaker's comments and he wanted the Committee to take to heart that their decision would impact many people, including future residents of Palo Alto.

Tony Carrasco advised that the Committee not eliminate any alternatives because they did not have all the facts in terms of grade slope, height, and finances.

Ed Shikada, Assistant City Manager explained that the City cannot slow down the process because many agencies were involved. He stated that the City had made remarkable progress in moving the community along with them in the process. In terms of the 2 percent grade design exception, he explained that many engineers needed to see what the idea looked like before they could weigh in on if a 2 percent grade would be functional or not.

Ms. Mercurio disclosed that AECOM had met with the Santa Clara County Water District (SCCWD) and their main concern was with the creeks that crossed through the trench option at Charleston and Meadow. SCCWD recommended that the AECOM talk to the Army Corp of Engineers because they may have some other issues associated with the creeks. In terms of a design exception for the 2 percent grade and vertical clearance, she explained that AECOM had met with Caltrain and that the design exception process was very lengthy. Caltrain stated that in terms of 2 percent grade or a different height limit, Caltrain would consider it on a case by case basis.

Council Member Scharff announced that he had not heard from anyone in the community who supported a raised rail alternative. He asked Staff how

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much it would cost to study a viaduct alternative.

Ms. Mercurio disclosed that the engineering drawings were already started and then the next step would be to start doing the visuals for a viaduct. She estimated it would be another couple \$100,000 to do those visuals.

Council Member Scharff stated that it was time to eliminate the viaduct alternatives.

Mr. Shikada interjected that Staff had used or would be using roughly a quarter million dollars for every alternative that was taken through an analysis.

Council Member Scharff restated that using the money on analyzing a viaduct was not financially responsible and the community had stated that they do not support any raised rail alternatives. He announced that he was supportive of looking at Palo Alto Avenue separately and leave it as is so that a proper analysis could be done for that grade crossing.

Mr. Shikada reported that looking at a Coordinated Area Plan for Palo Alto Avenue was probably the best approach for that grade crossing. He stated that if the Committee and Council agreed, then Staff would do that but additional funding for planning would need to be secured.

Council Member Scharff asked Staff to explain the timeline for Charleston and Meadow in terms of the proposed schedule.

Ms. Mercurio answered that the CAP had stated that it was important to focus on Charleston and Meadow, so AECOM was focusing on doing an analysis for that crossing at the current time. For the hybrid alternative at Charleston and Meadow, she explained that they were looking at a 1 percent grade and 2 percent grade where it was allowed. In terms of the trench, that alternative only worked with a 2 percent grade and the viaduct worked with a 1 percent but AECOM was also looking at a 1.4 percent grade option as wall. AECOM was also looking at the financing component, working on 3D visuals, and construction cost estimates. In terms of traffic studies, traffic data was being collected and that would be completed by January 2019.

Council Member Scharff restated that he was wondering when the 3D visuals would be done.

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Ms. Mercurio reported that draft visuals were proposed to be done by November 7th, 2018 for the CAP to review. Staff had also planned to present those visuals to the Committee in November 2018 prior to a full City Council meeting at the end of November 2018.

Council Member Kou inquired what the scope was for the CAP and AECOM when it came to looking and reducing cut through traffic in neighborhoods.

Ms. Mercurio explained that Staff was looking at existing traffic patterns and then reviewing what would happen to the traffic if Churchill was closed. That would be the baseline and then they would investigate what mitigations would need to be in place to elevate cut through traffic.

Council Member Kou wanted an explanation of what a partial closure would look like versus a full closure at Churchill.

Ms. Mercurio reported that in terms of a traffic analysis, a partial closure and full closure would be the same for a traffic analysis. Staff was still reviewing what a partial closure would mean from an engineering point of view.

Council Member Kou reiterated that if Churchill was closed partially, she wanted to know what time that closure would take place during the day.

Mr. De Geus articulated that Staff did not know that information at the time and they did not know if Caltrain would even allow it to be closed during certain times of the day.

Council Member Kou advised that Staff needed to receive that information so that the community could understand what a partial closure meant. She disclosed that she did not want to see the traffic analysis become the reason why Churchill was closed. She suggested that Staff analyze the traffic that was around Stanford Medical Center. She asked when was the last TAC meeting.

Ms. Mercurio announced it was in May 2018 before AECOM was brought on as a consultant. She added that because of personnel changes in different agencies, AECOM had updated the TAC list and a meeting was going to take place in the coming weeks.

Mr. Shikada added that Staff had been meeting with all the agencies that

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were involved but it had not been as a group.

Council Member Kou questioned if Staff had envisioned a meeting between the TAC and the CAP.

Ms. Mercurio reported that Staff was hoping to have the TAC meet before the CAP meeting so that the CAP could review what the TAC talked about.

Council Member Kou asked if the CAP or TAC meetings were open to the public.

Mr. Shikada answered that the TAC meetings were not public meetings. He went on to explain that at the TAC meetings agency representatives were not able to speak on the agency's behalf. Mainly they listened and then relayed information back to the agency for review and response.

Council Member Kou emphasized her frustration of working with many agencies and the agencies not worried about the community at hand or the City's project to grade separate the railroad. She did not see any forward progress happening if the City was always waiting for a reply to the agencies. She asked Staff where the City was with the State Congress and Senators.

Mr. Shikada reported that Congress's focus had been on supporting Caltrain electrification project as a regional transportation system. He stated that he was not sure if there had been any direct engagement to Palo Alto and their grade separation project. In addition, many cities along the Caltrain line were in a similar boat as Palo Alto.

Council Member Kou commented that she hoped the representatives that were on the City Council would push higher Elected Officials to notice that there are local issues as well in terms of the rail corridor. She voiced that she was concerned about rail noise and that needed to be brought to higher elected officials' attention. In terms of the list of items that Caltrain had to consider before they would grant a design exception, she wanted to know if that list would be shared with the CAP and the Committee.

Ms. Mercurio stated that would be shared with the CAP and the Committee when it was received.

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Council Member Fine reiterated that it was important for the Committee and Council to listen to the community and weigh different options. He advised that he did not think it was right to remove an alternative just because a clear majority of the community did not like it. He wanted to make sure that when something was removed it had data to back up on why that was a good decision to remove it. He requested Staff to provide a list of running issues that were closed or open. He inquired on what issues the TAC would be reviewing at the upcoming meeting.

Ms. Mercurio answered that she was looking to talk to the TAC about their technical input on the list of remaining preferred alternatives and lessons learned.

Council Member Fine advised that the TAC meetings should be documented and a running list is made on what issues they had already reviewed and what issues were coming up. He wanted to know if the creeks would still be an issue in South Palo Alto if another option, other than a trench, was chosen.

Ms. Mercurio reported that SCCWD stated that it would be a minimal impact if the rail were to go above the creeks instead of cutting through them.

Council Member Fine asked that in terms of a short tunnel with electric only trains and leaving freight at grade, he wanted to know what Staff thought of that idea.

Ms. Mercurio answered that the question to Caltrain was if freight was removed from an alternative, how did that impact the grade and vertical clearance, and Staff was waiting for Caltrain's response to that question. Caltrain also stated that they would communicate back to Staff on what the agreement with Union Pacific said in terms of freight.

Council Member Fine requested more information on the circulation study.

Ms. Mercurio disclosed that there were going to be a baseline study performed and that would be presented to the community in November 2018. Next steps would be to do a full analysis of if a crossing were closed, how that would impact traffic.

Council Member Fine reiterated that the community would like to see what

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would happen at surrounding intersections if a grade crossing was closed or altered.

Jarrett Mullen, Senior Planner explained that the analysis would work away block by block from a grade crossing and estimate which direction cars would take. By doing that, Staff can determine which intersections would need to be studied further.

Council Member Fine questioned if it was possible to close Churchill now to see what would happen.

Mr. Shikada stated that would be a bad idea.

Council Member Fine advised to add into the draft letter to Caltrain a funding ask and what would happen to the right of way if a viaduct was constructed.

Chair Wolbach wanted clarification on if relieving traffic impacts to Embarcadero if Churchill was closed was part of the scope of the project.

Mr. De Geus announced that it was part of the scope.

Mr. Shikada added that a design of a new Embarcadero crossing was not part of the scope.

Chair Wolbach agreed with Council Member Fine that a running list of open or closed questions was important. Also, that prioritizing South Palo Alto as a top priority was important. In terms of 2 percent grade and height clearance, he stated that he understood that planning for alternatives had to move forward so that Staff had something to present to Caltrain.

Mr. Shikada articulated that was the way Caltrain usually did things but the City did not necessarily have to follow those guidelines.

Chair Wolbach advised that pushing forward with planning and negotiating with Caltrain needed to be done in parallel. He strongly encouraged the Committee to have two preferred alternatives at the end of the process instead of one.

Mr. Shikada specified that was an option but the goal was to really see if any of the alternatives had fatal flaws in them versus waiting to see what

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Caltrain's response was.

Mr. De Geus added that having more than one preferred alternative was a question that needed to be posed to Council.

Chair Wolbach wondered if Staff should explore whether the City would want a standing contract rather than paying for a handful of analysis for intersections here and then more analysis later.

Mr. Shikada explained that the street light data used the cell towers to ping cell phones. As a person moved down the street, their cell phone is pinged and then that data of their travel throughout the City is collected. His main concern using that kind of system was privacy and how that system worked.

Chair Wolbach reported that he heard the suggestion of merging all overhead alternatives into one alternative. He wanted to know if that was a good idea.

Ms. Mercurio answered that when the trench alternatives were merged they were the same kind of construction but in terms of a hybrid versus a viaduct, they were two completely different construction processes.

Chair Wolbach restated that SCCWD did not prefer doing a trench in South Palo Alto. He asked if that was in response to a trench that had a 2 percent grade or a 1 percent grade.

Ms. Mercurio disclosed that it was in response to the trench blocking the creeks, it had nothing to do with grade.

Chair Wolbach asked which creeks were impacted.

Ms. Mercurio declared it was Adobe Creek and Barron Creek.

Arthur Keller stated that Adobe Creek was south of Charleston, about mid-way through the Green Meadow District. Barron Creek was just north of Alma Village.

Chair Wolbach announced that neither of those creeks were between Meadow and Charleston.

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Ms. Mercurio confirmed that was correct.

Chair Wolbach commented that in terms of an underground passenger only tunnel with freight remaining on the surface, how would the train separate from the Caltrain line so that the passenger train can go under. He suggested Staff start studying that concept. In terms of closing Churchill, the idea was to add a bike and pedestrian underpass.

Mr. De Geus stated that Staff was on the same level as the Committee in terms of Churchill and adding a bike and pedestrian underpass if it were closed.

Chair Wolbach reported his frustration with the lack of materials and lack of preparation for the meeting. He asked how the Committee could help Staff be better prepared.

Mr. Shikada noted that there was a Town Hall meeting on Monday night regarding traffic issues and that would be open to the community for their input.

Council Member Scharff articulated that he did not understand why the City would need permission from Caltrain to do anything at the Churchill grade crossing; partially closed or left open. Also, he restated that it would be better to look at Palo Alto Avenue as its own project but that it still needed to be grade separated. He agreed with Chair Wolbach that there needed to be a bike and pedestrian underpass at Churchill.

MOTION: Council Member Scharff moved, seconded by Council Member Kou to recommend the City Council remove viaduct options from consideration.

Council Member Scharff announced that it was important to study things that were meaningful and worth the money. The Community had voiced their opinions that a viaduct in South Palo Alto was not a good option.

Council Member Fine declared that he would not support the Motion because it did not state on the agenda that the Committee would be narrowing options. Another reason why he would not support the Motion is that Staff had articulated that a trench in South Palo Alto may not be possible as well.

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Council Member Scharff interjected that because he was recommending removing the viaduct option to the Council, the Committee could do that under this agenda item.

Chair Wolbach made an amendment to the motion.

INCORPORATED INTO THE MOTION WITH THE CONSENT OF THE MAKER AND SECONDER to add to the Motion, "add an alternative 5B, 'a passenger only rail tunnel, with single-track freight rail at-grade in South Palo Alto.'"

Chair Wolbach reiterated that he wanted to have a conversation at Council about eliminating the viaduct alternative and adding a passenger only rail tunnel alternative.

Council Member Scharff reported that he was not against the idea of adding another alternative to discuss at Council but he was against directing Staff to relocate the money from a viaduct to the new alternative. He agreed with Council Member Fine that the trench may not be feasible, which would leave the hybrid, road under the rail, as the only alternative if the viaduct were eliminated.

Council Member Fine reiterated that he was not comfortable adding or eliminating any of the alternatives.

Mr. De Geus added that there was time to add that onto the November Rail Committee Agenda as an item to discuss the removal of a viaduct.

Council Member Scharff emphasized that he did not want Staff to spend any more money investigating the viaduct alternative.

Council Member Fine noted that Staff was not spending the money at that time anyways.

Mr. De Geus interjected to state that Staff was at the point of spending large amounts of money to do a deep dive analysis of the seven preferred alternatives.

Mr. Shikada announced that Staff would review the schedule on when the rail project would be coming to Council and where the expenditures were in

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terms of studying the alternatives. He added that Staff was not currently scoped to investigate a single track at grade with a passenger train running underneath.

MOTION AS AMENDED RESTATED: Council Member Scharff moved, seconded by Council Member Kou to agendaize a Rail Committee discussion of removing the viaduct options from consideration and adding an alternative 5B, "a passenger only rail tunnel, with single-track freight rail at-grade in South Palo Alto."

Phil Burton announced that he was a member of the CAP and he agreed that it was premature to take any options off the table until there was an understanding of cost impacts. He wanted to know if a Motion of funding was going to be put in front of the voters or will Council decide on the alternative and the funding mechanisms.

Arthur Keller stated that a Business License Tax would be good for paying for the grade separations. He was frustrated that the Committee was not following a Context Sensitive Solution Approach. He wanted the City to be more involved with Caltrain's electrification project.

Barbara Hazlett announced that she supported Council Member Kou's comments that a traffic study and mitigation measures needed to be done to reduce impacts to neighborhoods around Churchill.

Mr. Patkar articulated that at a prior meeting the Committee had voted to merge two alternatives together without City Council approval. He did not understand why that could not happen presently with the elevated train track alternatives. He suggested the Committee think about a deep bore tunnel that would go below the creeks and that alternative would ease SCCWD worries about the creeks.

Ms. Naik acknowledged that there were materials and topics discussed during the meeting that was not agendaized. She wanted clarification on how the Committee could merge alternatives at one meeting without full Council approval and then decide at another meeting that they needed to have a discussion with the full Council to do the same thing. She announced her frustration of having the Transportation Department under staffed and the Committee and public not receiving enough information to make informed decisions at meetings. She suggested having an Ad Hoc Committee made up of two members from the Rail Committee who would work with the CAP

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and TAC on the best process for the project.

Jason Matlof clarified that at the June 2018 Council meeting, Council had motioned to remove the language specifically saying widen Embarcadero and substitute that with study additional options for addressing traffic in the Embarcadero Road Underpass. He agreed with Chair Wolbach's suggestion of having a backup alternative solution was best because there were too many critical questions unanswered. He disagreed that Palo Alto Avenue should be its own project.

Ms. Neff voiced her frustration about Staff and the Committee on the process in which they were approaching the project.

Mr. Lee reported that the Committee needed to figure out all the differences between the hybrid option and the viaduct before one is removed.

Council Member Fine summarized that the Committee had a set of question that were being discussed in a circle. He restated that the Committee needed a running list of open and closed questions.

Council Member Scharff agreed with Council Member Fine that there needed to be a list of open and closed questions. He agreed with the public speaker that Palo Alto Avenue could not be closed, it needed to be grade separated but he stated that Palo Alto Avenue was a combination project with surrounding intersections that needed to be looked at by itself.

Council Member Kou noted that the Committee had not received any technical materials to discuss. She was frustrated about the lack of material and information. She articulated that she was not happy with the response that the traffic consultant voiced at a prior meeting about collision data. She thought it was flawed.

Mr. De Geus clarified that his understanding was that the Committee wanted to see the Work Plan and wanted to see what the schedule was for the next four months.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: Council Member Fine moved, seconded by Council Member XX to accept the Work Plan and direct Staff to create a running list of key issues.

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SUBSTITUTE MOTION FAILED DUE TO THE LACK OF A SECOND

INCORPORATED INTO THE MOTION WITH THE CONSENT OF THE MAKER AND SECONDER to add to the Motion, "and accept the Work Plan and direct Staff to create a running list of key issues."

Mr. De Geus noted that there was a frequently asked question page on the website and he encouraged the community and the Committee to review that.

MOTION AS AMENDED RESTATED: Council Member Scharff moved, seconded by Council Member Kou to agendaize a Rail Committee discussion of removing the viaduct option from consideration and adding an alternative 5B, "a passenger only rail tunnel, with single-track freight rail at-grade in South Palo Alto" and accept the Work Plan and direct Staff to create a running list of key issues.

MOTION AS AMENDED PASSED: 3-1 Fine no

Verbal Update on Interagency Activities

Rob De Geus, Deputy City Manager explained that Staff had included in the Committee's Packets a letter to Caltrain that put-on record what open questions the City had for Caltrain. Staff heard feedback from the Committee during the meeting that a question needed to be added into the letter about funding and who would own the right of way if an elevated rail alternative were chosen.

Ed Shikada, Assistant City Manager added that the letter did require Council action.

Chair Wolbach articulated that hopefully following the submission of the letter to Caltrain, other Cities along the corridor would do the same and push Caltrain to answer crucial, clarifying questions.

Mr. Shikada noted that Staff would not be waiting for responses from Caltrain. Staff planned to move along with the proposed schedule.

Chair Wolbach reiterated that it would be a good idea to have a contingency plan and choose two preferred alternatives instead of one.

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Nadia Naik commented that for future meeting topics, Palo Alto should be writing a comment letter on the Business Plan and that the Committee needed to have that conversation. She stated it was important to hear from a lobbyist on what other cities were doing in terms of grade separations and that the City really needed to be involved with Caltrain's electrification project.

Arthur Keller pointed out that it would strengthen the letter if it mentioned specific examples of reduced heights and freight.

Council Member Fine agreed with Mr. Keller's suggestion of adding specific examples to the letter.

Chair Wolbach disclosed that in his opinion the letter should be sent by Council or from the Mayor without Council approval.

Council Member Scharff noted that it would be fine if the Mayor sent the letter.

MOTION: Chair Wolbach moved, seconded by Council Member Fine to direct Staff to finalize and send the Comment Letter, with the Mayor's signature, to the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (Caltrain).

MOTION PASSED: 4-0

Chair Wolbach emphasized that it was important to have representation at the Local Policy Maker Group meetings.

Council Member Kou asked Staff if the Local Policy Maker Group meeting schedule were on the website so the public could attend if they wanted too.

Mr. Shikada articulated that Staff would investigate it on how to promote those meetings.

Next Steps and Future Agendas

Rob De Geus, Deputy City Manager announced that at future meetings Staff planned to present materials about Charleston and Meadow, go over the evaluation matrix again, narrowing the alternatives as an agenda topic and present information about freight.

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Chair Wolbach advised that a standing item on each agenda was to be an update on what happened at the Community Advisory Panel (CAP) meeting, to include all public comments that were sent to Staff in the Packet, agendaize a representative from Caltrain to talk about the Business Plan at a future Rail Committee meeting, and agendaize a discussion with the lobbyist.

Ed Shikada, Assistant City Manager noted that he had November 14, 2018, as the next Rail Committee meeting. Staff would work on getting the lobbyist and Caltrain to attend that meeting.

Council Member Fine added that if the Committee contacted Caltrain, Caltrain would host a webinar about the Business Plan. Also, he asked Staff to bring back an update on what was going on with Caltrain's electrification project.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 11:08 A.M.