

SCHOOL/CITY LIAISON COMMITTEE
PALO ALTO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
CITY OF PALO ALTO

DATE: September 16, 2015

MINUTES FOR MEETING OF September 16, 2015

Opening

The School/City Committee held a special meeting in the District Conference Room A at 25 Churchill Ave, Palo Alto. The meeting was called to order at 8:05 a.m.

* All handouts can be viewed in the Business Services Office 25 Churchill Ave.

Palo Alto Unified School District Representatives:

Camille Townsend, Board Member, Committee Chair

Terry Godfrey, Board Member

Cathy Mak, Chief Business Officer

City of Palo Alto Representatives:

Pat Burt, Council Member

Tom DuBois, Council Member

Khashayar Alae, Senior Management Analyst

Approval of Minutes

The August 20, 2015, minutes were approved.

Oral Communications

Penny Ellson stated there has been great work with Safe Routes to School. In recent years, there has been a significant turnover of staff at City and District and important historical knowledge does not always get transferred. As a result, they have seen increasing decisions made without the usual problem solving process they know works well. Sometimes things come to them as a reminder when it is too late in the process to really make a difference. For example, Gunn recently changed their bell times without collaborating with City traffic engineers creating a less than safe commute for young children. She believes it warrants for staff training on Safe Routes to School resources, policies, and program benefits during this high period of staff turnover. Ellson would like to open a conversation on how they might engage their valued partners at the City and District and would like them to consider the following question:

"In order to reinvigorate our collaborative partnership and strengthen communication, what next steps or commitments should all of us make to ensure that new school site principals, appropriate essential central office administrators, City planning staff, and elected officials have the necessary policy resource and procedural information so we can work together as efficiently as possible within the Safe Routes to Schools partnership to achieve our shared goals?"

Review of Recent City Council/PAUSD Board Meetings
Safe Routes to School Update

No updates were reported.

City Transportation Planning Manager Jessica Sullivan stated that there have been shifts in City staff. They have recently hired Senior Transportation Planner Sarah Syed who has really taken a leadership role in the bicycle boulevard project and also Safe Routes to School Assistant Coordinator Maria Abilock. They have split the Transportation Department into two categories. Sullivan oversees the Transportation Planning Division which focuses on transportation demand management so implementing programs and policies related to single occupant vehicle trip reduction. This includes the Safe Routes to School program, the shuttle program, and the parking programs, all of that work. The Transportation Engineering Division is overseen by their new Transportation Official Joshua Mellow. This group includes Senior Transportation Planner Sarah Syed and the traffic engineering team that is doing a lot of work to move forward the big projects they have in the community.

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City staff presented on the following slides:

- Safe Routes to School Program
- Education Overview
- Bicycle Safety Curriculum
- Summer Bicycling Classes
- Fairmeadow Elementary School (Example of walk and roll map)
- Encouragement: PTA Bike to Middle school events
- Share the Road Posters – Bicyclists, Drivers, and pedestrians
- Upcoming Encouragement events: Palo Alto Walks and Rolls
- Enforcement Update Fall 2015
- Project Updates
- PAUSD Access Improvements
- City Access Improvements
- Project Implementation
- Churchill Corridor Improvements Phase 1
- Churchill Bike/Pedestrian improvement Phase 2
- Embarcadero Road Phase 1 and 2
- Charleston/Arastadero Corridor Project
- Palo Alto Shuttle Improvements

Safe Routes to School Coordinator Kathy Durham reported they continue to work on reducing risk to students on school commute and encourage more families to choose alternatives to driving solo more often. They go beyond the traditional traffic engineering and enforcement to achieve safety with in class education, enews, websites, and parent education that help students and their parents become safer road users. Their ongoing efforts to reduce congestion near schools not only focus on biking but also shared rides, taking the bus/shuttle or carpool lane.

Safe Routes to School Assistant Coordinator Maria Abilock reported their Safe Routes to School education starts with pedestrian safety lessons for kindergarten, first, and second grades; in third grade they provide a three part bicycle safety lesson that includes two classroom lessons and the bike rodeo; in fifth they provide a bike and traffic safety refresher; and in sixth grade during the orientation they have another bicycle safety curriculum that all students go through. This summer they worked on updating the curriculum, they updated the third and sixth grade curriculum extensively. They held summer family bicycle safety classes for ages 5-10 and for students ages 11-14 and their parents. The Palo Alto Police Department attended the middle schools' bike to school events and issued bicycle licenses.

Durham stated the middle schools and high schools have displayed posters of the upcoming Palo Alto Walk and Rolls events. The Bike Palo Alto 2015 event will be on Sunday, 10/4 @ El Carmelo and School Walk and Roll events on Monday, 10/5- 10/8. www.cityofpaloalto.org/saferoutes

Palo Alto Police Department: Traffic/Safety Update

Palo Alto Police Captain Ron Watson reported they currently have three motor officers on the traffic team. They just renewed the contract for the adult crossing guards for another three years with an optional one year extension.

The parents and students received the annual letter from the Chief of Police regarding Safe Routes to School.

Watson explained the Juvenal Traffic Diversion Program is for first time offenders under the age of 18 that have received a citation biking or on foot, not in a vehicle; they pay a \$10 fee, a letter is sent home, and the student must attend a 90 minute class with their parents.

Watson pointed out the biggest area the traffic team is focused on is the Terman/Gunn/Briones corridor; they do a lot of speeding enforcement, turn violations, and students running stop signs.

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Also the Paly Churchill crossing and Walter Hays at Embarcadero/Middlefield/Newell.

Godfrey asked if the 11 police positions were vacancies or eliminated. Watson answered they are a combination of police officers that are injured and vacancies and it takes over a year to train officers and place them on the road.

Townsend mentioned one crossing guard received an award for outstanding service.

Burt mentioned ticketing juveniles over on the Bryant corridor in the afternoon since that is when he is seeing the greatest infractions. There are students riding in traffic with no hands and no helmets, running the stop signs. Watson said they will try to spend a little more time in the afternoons over in that area.

Burt stated another is enforcement on Churchill Avenue, he has noticed they pull over violators into the bike lane rather than pulling into the school parking lot. Watson said he would mention it to the traffic sergeant. Townsend pointed out the sign on Churchill Avenue indicating cars may not drive straight through during the stated hours is very confusing and unclear.

Townsend asked about the number of juvenile accidents? Watson reported the numbers for the last three years are 33, 34, and 30; these numbers include all bike accidents at all hours of the day.

Review of City Transportation Projects Affecting PAUSD

City Senior Transportation Planner Sarah Syed reported the City and the District have been working together to improve access from Georgia Avenue to Gunn High School, Los Robles Avenue entrance to the Gunn bike path, and the Paly circulation near Embarcadero.

Other City improvements include the Terman Park path connecting Palo Alto to Los Altos and El Camino Way at the Maybell and Meadow connection.

Syed explained the project implementation process begins with a few community outreach meetings, stakeholders meetings, they come up with concept plans, then take them to approval to the Transportation Commission, and then City Council, then do an environmental assessment, and then they complete final design and construction documents. An entire project can take 1-3 ½ years.

Churchill Phase 1 is one of their current projects; they are currently in the design phase. City Council approved the concept plan and they are currently completing the environmental review and design. They will have a community meeting at the Paly campus on October 22.

Townsend asked if PTA council is aware of this project. Mak said not from the school district. Mak pointed out the City has done a series of community meetings. Ellson said this project has been to the City School Traffic Safety Committee meeting multiple times. It was also brought to the Paly PTA. Syed assured they would connect with Mak on the upcoming meeting dates and they will be presenting to the Board of Education as well. Syed said Churchill Phase 2 is a project they are doing with some cost savings from Phase 1. They are going to look at the Churchill and Alma crossing and will make this a part of their meeting on October 22. They recently had a site visit with Caltrain, CPUC, and Caltrans to review the crossing and they have identified it as one of the top in the state as a candidate for federal funding.

Burt mentioned that while riding across the Churchill and Alma crossing, when the bike lane is congested, there is temptation to ride onto the tracks through the gates as the most convenient bike route. He does not see it happen a whole lot but he wonders what interim measure they could take before the final plan. Syed reported they do have a Churchill Phase 0 which is an interim measure to clear the landscaping and connect the path with the dirt area and add a couple of bike ramps.

City Senior Engineer Holly Boyd reported they recently completed the Embarcadero Phase 1 improvements. Phase 2 is the corridor project; they will be taking the consultant contract for award to Council on October 5. This will look at capacity, bicycle and pedestrian improvements from the El

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Camino/Galvez intersection all the way down to the Caltrain train tracks. It will also include a study to look at pedestrian and bicycle connection opportunities using the existing multi-trail pathway near the Caltrain tracks. This will start off in October.

DuBois asked about the underpass at Embarcadero. Boyd said they have not discussed it for this project but she can check if it is on a future project list.

Burt pointed out that students are using the pedestrian overpass a lot more than they used to since they do not have to wait for a signal. Paly does not have a circulation that funnels to that overpass and it is just as important as what the City is doing. As a long term plan, they may need to look at a dedicated pedestrian bridge to be built. Godfrey mentioned the principal did relay the message to students to use the bridge during construction.

Boyd reported the Charleston and Arastadero Corridor project is moving forward with the design. The corridor is 2.3 miles that runs from Charleston to Fabian Way all the way down to Miranda Avenue at intersection with Arastradero Road. The current phase would install landscaped medians, bulb-outs and enhanced bicycle and pedestrian improvements. They had four community meetings and met with PTA groups to develop a preferred plan. They also attended a couple of the Traffic Safety Committee meetings. In April they presented the plan line to the Planning and Transportation Commission and they approved to move this project forward.

Townsend asked if the change in school bell schedules would come to her office. Boyd answered that it would come to the Chief Transportation Official. All of the bell schedules that were done happened in 2010 or 2011, when the land reduction took place on Arastradero. They did the adjustments for Juana Briones, Terman, and Gunn and they finessed it over a period of two years and then City Council approved it.

Sullivan reported the shuttle has served a very narrow group and they are taking a step back to put together a five year plan to improve the service so that it is more functional and more convenient. Parents and school age children are riding the shuttle but they would like people working in Palo Alto to use the shuttle. They will be sending out a survey and will be doing a community meeting in November to summarize what they found and get more collective input.

<http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/shuttle>

DuBois asked if they know how many school age kids ride the shuttle. Sullivan answered they have some idea but the data might not be accurate. They are trying to dig back into the data before they release the numbers.

Burt stated the Council has committed additional resources to expanding the shuttle and is committed to expanding it even more over time. He said the other drift is they have not been communicating and coordinating with the VTA bus system that has certain routes that are well serviced and other local routes that the VTA used to service for them and do not any longer; some of those routes specifically affect the schools. They need to coordinate those efforts and ensure that VTA is coordinating with them.

Burt mentioned the other topic is looking at how their bus routes and East Palo Alto bus routes serve their Voluntary Transfer Program (VTP) students. VTP students are not being included in the opportunities of the Middle School Athletic programs because of transportation issues. Sullivan stated they are trying to look at all services together and what is not being served. They have a route to East Palo Alto that no one rides and they are trying to figure out why. They are looking at VTA/SamTrans routes and trying to figure out what they are missing and combine it with the input from the community.

Godfrey asked a question for a parent in the community on whether the City still has plans to expand

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the shuttle to South Palo Alto to the Jewish Community Center (JCC). Sullivan answered there was a plan to go down to the JCC. Yes, they do want to expand to South Palo Alto but they need to do it more strategically. They did not get a lot private support for that plan. They realize there is need in that area but there are other routes that serve it so they are trying to figure out what is the most intelligent way of doing it.

Godfrey stated it would helpful if they could inform those groups that should know this information and anything they could do to make that happen.

DuBois stated they need to look at shuttles with school start times.

DuBois asked if they see BOOST taking off. Sullivan answered they will look at these services as part of this analysis and consider them.

Burt stated the best way to make sure they are seeing this reinvigoration and formalization of the Safe Routes to Schools Committee and how it relates to the City and the District is to request a report back at one of their upcoming meetings. He asked staff to return and report back with a plan on how they will be implementing this reinvigoration.

Burt stated that looking at how overflows and choice schools affect traffic, needs to be part of the conversation. In some locations it is a major issue. Perhaps this discussion can be scheduled for a future agenda as well.

Residential Parking & Addison School

Sullivan reported the RPP program kicked off in downtown yesterday. Parking will be restricted to permit hold, Monday-Friday from 8-5, except holidays. This is a resident driven program. They sold about 4500 permits, 3000 were resident permits, and about 1500 employee permits. The key point is it impacts Addison and the District has purchased permits for the first phase. They have asked the District to participate in the rollout of this program. It is a six month trial and the final program will be presented to City Council in December with the final recommendation.

Future Meetings and Agendas

Due to schedule conflicts, the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 14, 2015 at 8:00 a.m. at the District office.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 a.m.