



# CITY COUNCIL RAIL COMMITTEE TRANSCRIPT

Special Meeting  
Wednesday, June 28, 2017

Chairperson DuBois called the meeting to order at 8:04 A.M. in the Community Meeting Room, 250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto, California.

Present: DuBois (Chair), Filseth, Fine, Scharff

Absent:

## Oral Communications

Chair DuBois: Thank you. It's the June 28<sup>th</sup> meeting of the City Council Rail Committee (Committee). Do we have any Oral Communications? Thank you. We have one speaker, Richard Brand.

Richard Brand: Good morning everybody, Committee Members; Richard Brand, 281 Addison. The reason I brought this up, I went back and looked at the April video and when Tripousis, was here from High Speed Rail (HSR), he had a question from, I think Mayor Scharff about passing tracks. Which had come up and in that discussion, he mentioned that two out of the three of their options would bring passing tracks – four tracks into Palo Alto. He committed too – well, it wasn't a commitment but he said he would happy to provide you with information on this. A couple of us checked and that information has not been provided. We check with the High Speed Rail group and I would recommend this Committee ask for that information as a follow-up to the question that was proposed to him and his commitment to do so; that's my comment for today. I think people need to know about this passing track issue. It's still up in the air and he did indicate that he had two of three or three options are already on the table. Thank you.

Chair DuBois: We have a late entry, Adina Levin. Good morning.

Adina Levin: Good morning, Adina Levin Friends of Caltrain. A couple things, first of all, the – as you maybe know the – there is a regional Measure Three Bridge Toll Funding measure coming through at Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). Then for the State legislature, they would need to authorize the bill that they are talking about, the Allocation Plan, including

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some discussion up at MTC this evening. San Mateo County and Alameda County (AC) have – and AC Transit has placeholders in for Dumbarton funding – Dumbarton corridor pending the results of the SamTrans Study about what to spend the money on. However, I noticed that when I looked at the list of requests, that Santa Clara County does not have Dumbarton as one these requested projects. I am wondering whether this is something that Palo Alto and Mountain View do have something to gain from that connection to relieve traffic that flows through Palo Alto. Has that been requested through Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) and is that something that might be done even at this late date? If this is something that is already a policy, that seems kind of (inaudible). The second point, actually relating to the passing tracks, the High Speed Rail process is delayed to some uncertain date. One of the things that is important to look at the passing tracks is what the impacts are going to be physical to the local community. Also, what the impacts of not doing any passing tracks, which it seems like what High Speed Rail is trying to do; what the impacts would be on Caltrain schedule. The proposals that they talk about with no passing tracks have Caltrain trains sitting for five to ten minutes while the fast trains go by. If we want to get traffic off the roads, changing the Caltrain schedule so that our commuter trains wait for ten minutes for a train from Los Angeles (LA), doesn't seem to help our goal there either, so that's another thing to be looking out for. Thank you.

Chair DuBois: Ok, just wondering if Staff has any comments on either the High Speed Rail or the Dumbarton?

Joshuah Mello, Chief Transportation Official: Not at this time. We can certainly follow up on those.

Council Member Fine: Just comment, I think both speakers raised good points about clarifying the number and type of tracks going through Palo Alto. We have the obligation to ask about that and I am also interested in the comment about what does it mean if we don't do those tracks?

Mr. Mello: So, all the communications that we've had to date with both Caltrain and High Speed Rail have lead us to believe that they are not pursuing passing tracks in Palo Alto anymore. The only thing that they are presenting in the public now is the passing tracks from San Mateo to Redwood City. So, we can certainly ask for additional clarification from them.

## Agenda Review and Staff Update

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1. Receive and Review Rail Program Briefing Paper From May-June 2017

Chair DuBois: Ok, let's move onto Item Number 1 and Staff review.

Joshuah Mello, Chief Transportation Official: Sure, Item Number 1 is the Rail Program Briefing Packet and that's from May to June. It includes the period after your last meeting, all the way until the preparation of this Packet. One key thing that I do want to draw your attention to in that is section one says that we have reserved the Michell Community Park – Michell Community Center for October – for September 30<sup>th</sup> for your second Community Workshop. September 30<sup>th</sup> is actually a religious holiday so we have moved that to October 23<sup>rd</sup>. Then another key item in this Briefing Packet is a meeting that we had on June 6<sup>th</sup> with Caltrain staff and I just wanted to update you a little bit on the Electrification Project. On the screen, you will see a map for the Electrification Project and you see the corridors broken into four Segments – work segments. Caltrain is beginning construction on segments two and four pretty soon. It is a design-build contract so the way it's working is as construction starts, they're concurrently finishing up design for the final segment of each work segment. So, for example, constructions will likely start in South San Francisco on segment two, at the same time they are finalizing the design for the southern end in San Carlos, Redwood City, and Atherton. That explains why we have not seen the same level of design that Atherton has had because Atherton is in an earlier work segment.

Mayor Scharff: Can you tell us which segments are which? I can't see.

Mr. Mello: The top from San Francisco to Brisbane is segment one. From Brisbane to Atherton is segment two and then from Menlo Park to just north of Santa Clara is segment three and then everything south of Santa Clara is segment four. So, two and four will be the first segments constructed and then the design will begin on one and three and then they will progress down the corridor with the design. Then before they complete design for one and three, they will actually start construction on the northern segments of one and three.

Chair DuBois: You said October 23<sup>rd</sup>? That's like in the middle of the week for the next community meeting. Did you mean September?

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Mr. Mello: Oh, sorry 28<sup>th</sup>, October 28<sup>th</sup>. It's a Saturday and it will be exactly the same format as the last meeting that we had.

Mayor Scharff: Wait, September 28<sup>th</sup> or...

Mr. Mello: October 28<sup>th</sup> and we tried – we looked all over for a room that was available in September or early October and we just couldn't find anything. So, that concludes the update under Item 1.

Chair DuBois: Any comments or questions?

Mayor Scharff: So, just on this schedule – so, the schedule here with all this stuff is wrong, right? The schedule where it says September 30<sup>th</sup> for Community Workshop 2. That's October 28<sup>th</sup>?

Mr. Mello: That's correct and that change was made after the preparation of this Report so I apologize for the mistaken date.

Mayor Scharff: Somewhere in the Staff Report it said September.

Mr. Mello: All of the meeting materials were prepared before we realized that September 30<sup>th</sup> was a religious holiday and had to move the date.

Chair DuBois: So, it would be good to get into your calendars that the (inaudible) has there. Yeah?

James Keene, City Manager: Could I just go back for a second on the construction schedule real quickly. I mean is the idea that each segment is completed construction before the next batch starts? I mean is one and whatever it is – is it two and four, are they finished before one and three starts?

Mr. Mello: I don't believe so. I think they are just staging it so that they can mobilize and complete design in an efficient manner in advance of construction.

Mr. Keene: Then for our segment, what's the rough time period for construction? How long could that be? What's the range of time I guess, just out of curiosity?

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Mr. Mello: I can look into that. I know the whole project is expected to be finished by, I believe 2021.

Chair DuBois: A couple quick questions, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, that seems like a long time without community input. How are we going to get community input between then and now?

Mr. Mello: We can update you on that under the next Item on the update from the summary of the workshop.

Chair DuBois: Ok and then I saw here that you have the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting in August. What are we asking them to advise on? What's the agenda for that meeting?

Mr. Mello: The first meeting will just be an intro of our Rail Program and explain where we are in the process and there will be no decisions made or anything beyond just introducing them to the project.

Chair DuBois: It seems a little – I'd like to have like community input and community ideas for the TAC to give advice on. So, it sounds like we are getting a little out of sync maybe. Then that's for the update on the construction. Who is responsible for tracking the Electrification Project and the impact of trees and pole design?

Mr. Mello: So, we are currently working on finalizing a Comprehensive Agreement with Caltrain for the Caltrain Modification (Cal. Mod.) Project. We had a meeting last week and there is a follow up meeting this the attorneys this coming week to try to finalize that agreement. That will be coming to Council and that outlines the review process for the different elements of the Cal. Mod.

Chair DuBois: Are you personally tracking this?

Mr. Mello: That's being led by the Public Works Development Services Manager but we have participated. All the various City departments are participating.

Chair DuBois: So, Public Works is going to be looking at the tree impacts?

Mr. Mello: They will be – in the agreement, there will be a process outlined

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on how all of that will be reviewed and what the City's responsibilities are versus the design-build contractor and Caltrain. That agreement will be coming forward to Council.

Mr. Keene: (Inaudible) and Public Works and you know, Brad Eggleston is a key. We have several Staff people dedicated to this.

Chair DuBois: Well, hopefully, the message is clear that there's concern. Ok, thank you. We will move onto Item – yep?

Council Member Fine: Thank you. So, building on Tom's point, it would be nice to just see the TAC Agenda as you guys are publishing them and working with them. I don't know how my Colleague's feel about this but the one that I kind of felt was missing from the group was maybe the Planning & Transportation Commission (PTC). The 't' is often in that group but I don't know if Staff has any comments there. Was PTC considered?

Mr. Mello: We'll also provide information on that with the next Item on the Agenda.

Council Member Fine: Then just a last question, so we are going on break and as Tom mentioned, the next meeting is in October which is a way off. I did notice that there's this Online Community Survey through July and there's the three bullet points; problem statement, project goals, and evaluation criteria. What's the survey? Is the survey like do you know this is happening?

Mr. Mello: If you like, we can move into Agenda Item 2. We were going to talking about a lot of those during that Item.

Chair DuBois: Yep, let's do that.

## **NO ACTION TAKEN**

### Agenda Items

2. Review and Comment on the Draft Written Report on the Connecting Palo Alto: Rail Program Community Workshop #1 Held on May 20, 2017

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Chair DuBois: So, first we – why don't you go ahead and then we have one public speaker.

Joshuah Mello, Chief Transportation Official: Great, so included in your Packet is the draft written Report for the workshop that we held on May 20<sup>th</sup> and please review that at your leisure and provide us any comments you may have on it; any takeaways. We used this to inform – as well as your direction at the meeting to inform our next steps over the summer. What we are proposing is to go to Planning & Transportation Commission (PTC) on August 9<sup>th</sup>, City Council Rail Committee (Committee) on August 23<sup>rd</sup> and then City Council on August 28<sup>th</sup> with a multi-part Staff Report and Action Item that would include a draft problem statement, draft goals for this project and then draft performance measures. As well as an updated community engagement Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) Plan that Chair DuBois suggested that we bring to Council at the last meeting. I would be a four-part Action Item and we were proposing to go to PTC first, the Rail Committee, and City Council. Then in order to keep the public involved throughout the summer, we didn't just want to just fall off the radar so over the summer we are proposing of doing an Online Survey throughout the month of July. That would help us kind of refine the recommendations that came out of the Community Workshop on May 20<sup>th</sup>. So, we would ask the public to provide input on the problem statement, the goals, and the performance measures and we would use that survey input, as well as feedback from the interviews that we had in the workshop on May 20<sup>th</sup>. To draft the problem statement, the goals and performance measure that we would then bring to PTC, Rail Committee and Council in August.

Chair DuBois: Any questions or comments? So, that wasn't actually in the Report. That's new information as well, right?

Mr. Mello: It is, it is, it's a – we had always planned to do a second Community Workshop and now that it's been moved to October, we feel it's very important to keep the community involved and to bring along the people who turned out on May 20<sup>th</sup>. As well as other folks, other stakeholders and constituents, so we think the survey will be a good way to maintain that involvement. We are also likely to do some newsletters – some e-newsletters where we take some of the information provided to the Rail Committee and put it in a more readable format for general citizens; in a newsletter through email.

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James Keene, City Manager: So, two things, one is when we do come back say to Rail on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. One of the components that we're talking about here is sort of what our engagement strategies and options will be. We're hopeful that we can bring a range of approaches and tools. That being said, we've got a meeting this morning at the Staff level, just sort of talking about this survey a little bit. Josh, if it's ok with you and the Committee if we could talk about that just for a little bit. Your sense of the survey because I'm just curious in what your thinking is about who are we trying to engage. In other words, there are people who are really sort of involved in this and who, no pun intended, track this issue. Who might know more logically get on and get really involved in a detailed survey versus just sort of say the public at large? I am kind of curious about your thinking about that as an elected representative here in the community.

Chair DuBois: Before we dive into that, we do have one public speaker...

Mr. Keene: Ok, sure.

Chair DuBois: ... so, should we put a pin in that and come back to it. We have one speaker, Richard Brand.

Richard Brand: Yeah, I know I'm pretty noisy for this time of the morning. Richard Brand, a resident of Palo Alto, actually Council Member Fine brought up the point I had about the PTC. So, I know at the last meeting that was an issue that was – I thought an action but at least it was a recommendation and I firmly support that the PTC is a good way to pursue this while things are shut down. The other thing to on this Report and I attended the workshop. I live in the north part of the City, which I felt was not very well represented based on the number of comments that were made about the crossing at Alma and El Camino; the one on the north end of town. I think while there is a lot of energy down in the middle and the south part of the City. Obviously because of the four – three tracks Churchill South, I don't want to overlook the importance of that entrance in that crossing. That's a tough one because we are right on the creek there so just to make that point. That's something that even though you won't see a lot of responses in the Report, I think there's a lot of interest once people start to realize what this is all about. The other thing too, there is a thing in here about passing tracks. I know Mr. Mello made a comment about that but I'd encourage you to look at the April video and you will see that passing tracks in the Palo Alto are an option on the table for them. Thank you.



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Chair DuBois: Ok, so we have any comments on the survey? Those types of questions?

Council Member Filseth: Jim is still talking (inaudible).

Mayor Scharff: Yeah, Jim, you were going to say something (inaudible).

Mr. Keene: I mean I just – the Staff has been working on a design. It looks like some of it's – maybe some follow-up from the May 30<sup>th</sup> session that we had. I am just curious, some of you were there, you saw when we did the little sort of stiffly survey and that sort of a thing. Do we want to replicate that; deepen that? Follow-up? Again – yeah, maybe Josh can speak a little more.

Mr. Mello: So, the survey it kind of defines what came out of the May 20<sup>th</sup> workshop and will enable folks to give us additional direction to get to – eventually get to a draft problem statement, goals and performance measures that are much more detailed than what came out of the May 20<sup>th</sup> workshop. It's primarily a way, I think to keep the public engaged throughout the summer. We don't want people to lose interest, especially since we are going to have to push the second meeting all the way till October. So, we certainly would like to hear your thoughts on the approach to distributing the survey. Whether that's an appropriate strategy before it coming to PTC, Rail Committee and City Council in August.

Mayor Scharff: Yeah, I mean I think that's an appropriate approach. I mean I guess I would like you to engage as broadly as many people as possible. I mean I guess the purpose of the survey is to engage the community, as opposed to having an appropriate sample and get a meaning full cross section, right? We're not – they are two different things so I mean I guess I wanted to know first of what Staff thought we were going to do there? I mean are we going to poll or are we basically trying to get as much engagement as possible? That means that the results we get probably won't mean anything in terms of what the community thinks or any of that. I guess I'm trying to get a sense of what you are looking to accomplish with this.

Mr. Mello: I think it's primarily a way to keep the community engaged and not bring something forward to PTC, Rail Committee and Council without first consulting with the larger community. One of the primary tenants of CSS is to keep the stake holders continually involved in the process. I think

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as we move forward in this process, we are going to have to get to a point where we make decisions in a more structured manner with the public but I think this initial survey is just more of an engagement tool.

Mayor Scharff: So, I think the big problem here is we've moved it from September 30<sup>th</sup> to October 20<sup>th</sup>, which is too late. It should be done earlier and I am sure you've thought about it. I am not saying – I just – I think that's the fundamental issue and is there a reason we can't do some of the other weekends?

Mr. Mello: We looked at the usual large forums that are available to us through the whole month of September and there is nothing available.

Mayor Scharff: So, who has these forums? (Inaudible)? No, seriously, I mean we own the facilities, bump them. This is more important. I (crosstalk) mean I think October 28<sup>th</sup> is too long. I mean I don't know if anyone else agrees but it seems that's what we are trying to shoehorn around and you know -- I mean...

Chair DuBois: Could we (inaudible) the schools even, before school starts? So, I have kind of the same thoughts. I think we need to be really clear with what the purpose of the survey is. If it's really just engagement and its self-selected people, let's not then use that data as facts. You know, if we really want input, I would think the methodology is really critical so should we mail to people who live within a certain distance of the track to at least try to get some kind of representation? Even to Richard Brand's point, maybe – if you really want to engage people, maybe we have slightly different surveys for different areas. We ask people who live near grade crossings about that grade crossing. I think that would be interesting to hear that if we were under represented with North Palo Alto for Alma if we mailed to everybody who lived around that intersection, they would probably have more ideas. So, again I don't want to mix it and do like an Online Survey and then we treat that data as statically representing something.

Mr. Mello: I think the survey would just be another data point in – we've already collected a lot of great information from the individual interviews that we did in advance of May 20<sup>th</sup>. We also got great feedback on May 20<sup>th</sup> and then the third kind of data point would be the survey. None of those are scientific by any means but I think when we bring it forward to PTC, Rail Committee, and Council, we make it very clear that this is a summary of all of the engagement. I think one of the things that we could also do was

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maybe we go back to those individuals that we interviewed and talk to them about the problem statement. Then have a second follow up interview where we get more into the weeds about the problem statement and the goals and the performance measures.

Chair DuBois: Maybe there is an opportunity over the summer to do something more scientific. Again, maybe it's a mailing and it doesn't have to be super expensive. A couple other quick thought, in terms of refining the goal and the problem that we are trying to solve. The next Item is pastwork but there was a lot of community done and I am wondering if we should leverage the goals that the Rail Corridor Study identified in 2012-2013. The last point, I think I mentioned it last time but I saw in the Report, Lydia Kou did attend half the day and she wasn't – we specifically listed Council Members that were there and I think we should add her to the Report. What's that?

Council Member Fine: Me too.

Chair DuBois: Weren't you – you were listed, right? Oh, ok, so two more.

Council Member Filseth: I was just going to comment that if the goal is engagement and we're not going to do anything with the data, then I think maybe we ought to consider whether the survey is actually the right vehicle or something might be more appropriate.

Mayor Scharff: Yeah, I was going to follow-up on that. I think a survey is confusing because then people think we are getting data and then if I like the results, I'll say look, Tom, those results were great. Like we did last time and Tom said those results mean nothing because of they – I mean that was exactly the conversation we had. If Tom had liked the data, I would have said Tom, those studies don't mean anything.

Chair DuBois: Well, no, there is science.

Mayor Scharff: Well, but the point is that – I mean if you want to keep people engaged, have small community meetings. Go out to the – have a small community meeting around the Alma one, have a small community meeting with those stakeholders or do something – I don't know. I mean, I am not sure what the answer is but I do think the most important thing is moving that October 28<sup>th</sup> meeting earlier.

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Mr. Keene: So, just so we're clear, how do we have not such a big gap? What Josh has been talking to us about is that even if we were on our original schedule, the last public engagement was at the end of May. So, we've to go to sort of stay fresh in some way with the community that says hey, this is still happening and you're still involved. It also sounds like we're talking more about trying to design things that aren't ultimately, I'll just call it scientific per say. I think that might have some challenges anyway. I mean it does seem that we want to get a little more refined as to what we really think the descriptions of the world is and the issues before we're going to go out. I think you want to have that informed – more statistically significant survey, rather than just stuff that's all over the map and you can throw it up on the walls sort of thing.

Mr. Mello: If we elected not to do the survey, there are a couple of alternatives that I don't necessarily know would work as well, which would be to try to throw together a public meeting in advance of the PTC, which will be the first meeting on August 9<sup>th</sup> where we bring forward the draft problem statement, goals, and performance measures. I don't think we have the resources to throw together a meeting in July. We would also get criticized for having a meeting when people are out of town and school is out. The other alternative would be to bring the draft problem statement etc. to PTC without getting public input through a survey or some other mechanism. Then I think we would be criticized for that as well, so there are other alternatives. The third would be to delay everything and have a – at the September public meeting, use that to develop the problem statement, the goals, and the performance features.

Mayor Scharff: I actually think the problem is we are using the word survey. I think if we called it -- we're reaching out and getting public input and this is the public input that we received and here's a questionnaire for public input. Questionnaire – I mean I've been thinking about what the problem is and I think it's just terminology and we shouldn't get hung up. So, I think it's a good idea and I think you should go do it. I just think we shouldn't – I think if we call it a survey, we'll – we ourselves will get hung up on what that means. Where if you call it a questionnaire and this is the public input, this is what we received, we're keeping the public engaged. I think all of those are (inaudible) goals.

Chair DuBois: I think you just called it something else. I mean, again, I think there is a choice. We could do something more scientific to get public input or we're going to get a bunch of input but we really don't know what it represents or we do some kind of other outreach and you mentioned August.

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Again, if there is some location in September or some way we could do something with the public in September, I do think that would be better. Again, it feels like you just want to have outreach and keep people engaged. I am not sure why we are mixing that with data collection.

Mayor Scharff: That's what I was trying not to do, is mix it with data collection and mix it with – it's equivalent of like public speakers. Well, it's equivalent of having like a public speaker; it's not scientific. You know, Mr. Brand shows up, we listen to what you say, we think about what you say and there's no one else in the room who's the public speak except (inaudible) but we listen to you too. I mean that's really what I mean, is that's good.

Council Member Fine: Just a few things, so I do agree with most of you about what is the core purpose of the survey. I think Tom you have hit it that there's either engagement or there's data and we may not get them in the same way. One thing whether we call it a survey, a questionnaire or public input, I was really struck at the community meeting how informative (inaudible) about what a grade separation is to folks. As we are going through the problem definition, I know we are not supposed to precede ideas in the CSS process but it may be helpful to just show folks a smatter of what is possible. Whether local examples or around the world or the country. I just kind of got the sense from a lot of folks -- when you say we were talking about grade separations and grade separations and passing tracks and at some level, folks just need to be reminded that these are roads underneath or over rail or something like that. I just find those helpful and think it might be a nice way to (inaudible) the public.

Mr. Keene: I just want to – so, we also have this is just practical real-life problems, right? I mean there's a summer break and people in town go out of town also so it's a little bit more of a dormmate period. Josh is going to be off for a month, as we shared.

Mayor Scharff: You're allowing that?

Mr. Keene: If we want to keep him for the long term. Then it takes work to put these things together. I mean to really develop a scientific survey for example. I mean it gets more complicated and some framing questions for input. I would just ask that we realize that we're going to have to try ten or twenty different things over time and they all kind of inform. Almost anything we're going to do is going to be – anybody is going to be able to

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criticize it. Well, I would have asked that question that way or you know. I mean this is Palo Alto after all, so it's always the challenge of let's get something together and do it. Then let's also be sure it's perfect and it hits every sort of sweet spot and we're not going to be able to do that. That's why I do think that right at this stage we're going to talk more later this morning on the Staff that some outreach and something that is informative, keeping this subject alive and getting some perspectives from people is what we would do as opposed to really trying to draw conclusions in this next step. We did want to bring it up because you might even get the questionnaire yourself or you'll certainly hear from people, hey I got this questionnaire from the City. God, it was like – you know it took me an hour to do the thing or whatever it was or I didn't understand the questions or I really liked them or it was too simplistic. I mean you're just going to hear all of that stuff and that's why we did was to surface it with you. Then realized that this is not our only shot, this is just another link in the chain between now and at least the next meeting.

Chair DuBois: Alright, so I think ...

Claudia Keith, Chief Communications Officer: Claudia Keith, Chief Communications Officer. I just want to make the point that we do have a lot of platforms that we used a lot in the Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) for the elements for just this very purpose; whether to get a touch point or to engage the community. That we haven't used as scientific but it's definitely been public input. We have like 2,000 subscribers to open City Hall, which is a really good venue. Next door we've had good results and of course, we have a lot of social media channels. So, if we're looking to just keep the community engaged, we have those tools in place and of course, devising the right content in what you are asking is important but that is something that we do a lot and it's readily available. That would be one way to at least reach out to the community and let them know what is going on.

Chair DuBois: Ok, so I think we will close that out and you heard a lot of the feedback. Are you guys going to see if it's possible to do something in September?

Mr. Keene: Oh yeah, as far as finding a venue in time.

Mr. Mello: Yeah, so my takeaways and please correct me if I am wrong but we're going to try to find a meeting location for September. We're going to – I think we should re-interview the stakeholders that we've talked to about

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the questions that we are going to ask on the questionnaire. We're going to look at the 2014 Study and see if there are items that we can pull from that into the goals for this project. We'll make edits to the Reports to add Lydia Kou and Council Member Fine to the list of attendees. Then we will call it a questionnaire, not a survey and make it very clear that it is helping solicit public input for upcoming decisions by PTC, Rail Committee, and Council.

Chair DuBois: Great. Let's move onto Item Number Three which is ... Sure.

Council Member Filseth: On the takeaway from the meeting, I mean my sort of really high-level take was we ask people what they care about in grade crossings and the answer was auto congestion, bike, and pedestrian safety. Is that an accurate summary?

Mr. Mello: Yes, and those varied by grade crossing. So, some of them bike/ped was more important. Some motor vehicle circulation was more important.

## **NO ACTION TAKEN**

3. Receive Summary of Previous Rail Corridor Planning Efforts and Schedule of Other Grade Separation Projects Along the Peninsula

Chair DuBois: So, moving onto Item 3 which is a review of past rail efforts.

Joshuah Mello, Chief Transportation Official: Thank you. This Item was prepared at your request. It includes a summary of all recent studies and Council actions related to grade separations. It includes a summary of the 2014 Rail Corridor Study, as well as the – sorry, the – I think it was 2012 Rail Corridor Study and then the work that was done by Mott McDonald around the trenching feasibility analysis. It also includes a schedule that we put together and I'll pull that up on the screen. So, this is an attempt by us to visually represent where each of the other jurisdictions are in their planning process for grade separations. I pulled it up on the screen if you want to look at it in a little more detail. So, you see we're a couple years behind most of the other jurisdictions in our planning and design work. The ones without bars, it was a little bit hard to get additional information on where they are in their process. In Palo Alto, Mountain View and Sunny Vale, Rengstorff Avenue at Mountain View is by the furthest along in the project development process and those are relevant because of the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) grade separation funding that has been

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allocated. So, please let me know if you have any questions or comments or requested edits to this information.

Chair DuBois: I had a question on the slide actually. I think it would be really useful to know kind of what form of grade separation each of these City's is using and what their budget estimates are. I just think that would be really useful to see maybe at the next meeting. I guess the other thought that I had is we have this thick packet of planning that we've done but we're saying that we haven't don't any planning. I mean I am wondering if – when we look at other Cities, I mean it's not like we haven't been doing anything.

Mr. Mello: So, there's kind of two levels of planning in a transportation project. There's the high-level kind of Corridor Study type plan that we have done and then there's the project development process, which is the concept planning, preliminary design, environmental and final design. These – this schedule is really just looking at the project development process, not any kind of circulation analysis or a Comp. Plan or anything that's more of a high-level policy plan.

Chair DuBois: Any other comments?

Council Member Filseth: I noticed that document 34-10 is in here twice actually but I noticed from the 2012-2013 area that the previous or incarnation of the City Council Rail Committee (Committee) the preferred alternative was the trench. Is that still something that we should follow or how should we treat that?

Mr. Mello: Well, the Rail Corridor Study was a policy document that was incorporated into the Comp. Plan. That is, I think to be taken as a guiding principle as we move forward but you know the true Context Sensitive Alternative Analysis process really should start with a relatively blank slate. It's hard to pre-prescribe a solution if we haven't yet identified the problem and the goals and the performance measures. I think that is definitely a guiding principle moving forward but you know we're taking it from the very high-level policy plan down to project development, which is a lot more specific in its look at feasibility and budget and future funding and other aspects.

Mayor Scharff: Could I just follow up on what you just said. I am not sure I followed it. So, Council Member Filseth asked whether or not trenching was a



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guiding principle and you said it was by Council policy, is that what you were thinking?

Mr. Mello: The Rail Corridor Study was incorporated. If you look at the item that is included in your Packet, it was incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) by Council action. One of the recommendations of that is to advance the trench alternative.

Mayor Scharff: So, when we adopt the new Comprehensive Plan – the problem I am having is the second part of what you said as well, which is we basically adopted to let's go out to the community, let's do a Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process, let's outreach, let's do that and as you said, that doesn't predetermine a decision of what we're going to do before we do the process. We can't have a guiding principle that says that this is what we've chosen to do, right? So, that's basically what you were saying. We can't have a guiding principle, it's what's been chosen to do, which would be a trench and that's in the Comprehensive Plan. So, I would think that supersedes the prior Council policy because we adopted going out and doing that. So, I actually think it can't be Council policy because that's not the policy that we are following. We're not all sitting here deciding how we do a trench, we're going to the community. So, ...

Chair DuBois: I think (inaudible) a preference for a trench.

Mayor Scharff: So, that's a good question, so if it's a preference, that's a different issue than saying the trench is the policy.

Council Member Filseth: (Inaudible) preferred alternative.

Mayor Scharff: Ok, so I am just – then we adopt the new Comprehensive Plan, are we adopting it with that Rail Corridor Study or not?

Mr. Mello: I'll let Hillary jump in but there's also the whole issue of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in this process and we can't predetermine an alternative before we go through the environmental process just because something is identified in a Comp. Plan but I'll let Hillary...

Hillary Gitelman, Planning Director: Thank you. Hillary Gitelman the Planning Director. The Comprehensive Plan that the Council seen now any number of times talks about grade separating all of the crossings but it doesn't specify

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the methods. The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has talked about trenching for Charleston and Meadow because we had the Study that you received a copy of this morning that identified that as a potentially feasible way to get it done. It had some traction at the time we started the EIR process but I think we're suggesting adoption of a Comp. Plan that leaves open exactly how the grade separations would be accomplished while acknowledging this prior work and the 'preference' for either depressed or certainly not an elevated alignment.

James Keene, City Manager: I sent this language in the – the language in the draft new Comp. Plan does that – do we retrench from our earlier Comp. Plan position? I mean the...

Mayor Scharff: Well, that was my question, my question was are we not – if we're not incorporating that Rail Study into the new Comp. Plan, which I assumed we were not frankly when we were doing the Comp. Plan. I don't remember seeing that but I...

Ms. Gitelman: No, we reference it as source material but the new Comp. Plan talks about grade separating all four crossings and doesn't specify how.

Mayor Scharff: Ok, so once we adopt that, we will have solved this little technical issue.

Chair DuBois: I had – I guess I kind of caught the tail end of this but I guess what my big question was what happened? We were kind of going through this process and then it stopped.

Mr. Keene: You mean, say before you were on Council?

Chair DuBois: Yeah. You probably had the most contacts.

Mr. Keene: No, I – you know – go, yeah.

Mr. Mello: In the summary that is included in this Item, you will see that the 2012 Study was primarily a reaction to the work that was underway with High Speed Rail (HSR). When the High Speed Rail project became less urgent, I think – unfortunately I think the grade separation work also became less urgent and some of the follow through items...

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Mayor Scharff: No money (inaudible).

Mr. Mello: Yeah and some of the follow through items that are identified in the Corridor Study didn't come (inaudible). I think a lot of it was because of the urgency of the High Speed Rail (HSR) project; it died off a little bit.

Chair DuBois: My impression kind of reading some of this stuff was that there is some good work here. We did some community output. We started to do kind of pre EIR work. As we do community outreach, I think we should build on this and maybe we should summarize some of this for the community. Again, the vision statement here on Page two seems like a good vision statement.

Mr. Keene: Are we on 34-` 10 of the Staff Report?

Chair DuBois: Page 131.

Mr. Keene: Yeah, (inaudible).

Chair DuBois: I mean maybe there is a statement that could be used to feed into helping to form the goals. Again, I think it was good to see and again, we kind of – some of this isn't really that old. I mean some of it is a bit older but I think a lot of the same people are involved in the community. I kind of feel like we shouldn't ignore this and throw a lot of this away.

Mr. Mello: Yeah, I guess I see – so, overarching everything, I see the Comp. Plan and then the Rail Corridor Study at the next level and then the work that we are undertaking over the next two years is kind of further refining both of those and getting us to much more finite discussion around the actual projects that it would take to implement some of the visions that come from those two higher plans.

Ms. Gitelman: If I can just add something, I mean I think we have been struggling with this since we started this year's Rail Committee meeting. Which is we have committed to the CSS process, which is kind of a blank slate process and at the same time, we've done all this prior work and many of us have our own personal vision of what we think the ultimate alternative or alternatives should look like. So, we're -- every time we meet, we're kind of having this discussion. How much difference do we give to the prior work?

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Chair DuBois: Well, again, as a bundle of ideas, it seems like including it in the bundle would be a good idea. There – I saw in here some interesting ideas that were not in our current list like, I think bike/ped under Alma. I think I saw a bike path on Kellogg to Pally instead of taking it off of Churchill, which was something we haven't been talking about at all.

Ms. Gitelman: Yeah, that came up at the workshop too.

Chair DuBois: Yeah, it seemed like there were some good options here that we've kind of dropped.

Mr. Keene: So, if I might suggest it, I would say what we are talking about here is less directly in the realm of a planning process and more in the realm of what's the narrative that we develop that kind of conveys a kind of picture of the world drawing on what we've done in the past and these different options. When we are engaging with the community, there's both a sense of some continuity and possibilities in all those sorts of things and they are not meant to be prescriptive. They are also not meant to forget things that we've done. I think that's something that we can work with on our outreach.

Council Member Fine: So, Jim, to kind of build off on that, as Hillary said we're in this agnostic process but we obviously know a lot of things. It may be worthwhile to be explicative about that, right? I mean I would be interested to hear from Staff of how has the problem statement actually -- if you had to write it 5 years ago and you had to write it today, what does Staff think that is? Then also to a point, Hillary you guys may be having some preferred alternatives in mind already and we may be able to be explicative with the community in letting them know Council and the City have been trying to deal with this for 10-years or maybe longer. We lost the ball for a while but now we are back. We're doing this agnostic process and yet we still have all this knowledge and Staff thinks these are some of the ways it's changed and these are the parameters we are working with. I think we can be agnostic, do CSS and be explicative about what we do know and preference we actually do have.

Mr. Keene: I was – I think the vision statement is actually pretty eloquent. I was just up in Gettysburg and it's very Lincolnest, and to connect the east and west portions of the City to improve circulation that works – that binds the City together in all directions.

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Chair DuBois: Any other comments on this Item? Yeah. Again, I do think it's important to refer to that past because a lot of these people were involved and they are going to be – I think we heard a little bit at the workshop like what about – what happened to all this work we already did?

## NO ACTION TAKEN

4. Review Rail Corridor Circulation Study Sample Scenarios and Provide Recommendations

Chair DuBois: Ok, let's move on to Item Number 4.

Joshuah Mello, Chief Transportation Official: Thank you, Chair. Item Number 4 we are going to change gears a little bit and we're going to talk about another work product that is going to come out of our Rail Program Management Contract. This is somewhat separate from the Context Sensitive Solutions Alternatives Analysis task. This is more of a technical analysis that will be using the regional travel demand model as well as our local travel demand model, which dynamically assigns trips to different roadways based on lineage, free flow travel speed, and other factors. So, one of the things that we think would be beneficial pretty early in the process is to get a handle on how the transportation network in the City would be affected if we were to grade separate certain crossings. Hypothetically if we were to close a crossing or make a crossing bike/ped only and we have scoped for the project team to analysis six scenarios on using the travel demand models. As well as two no-build scenarios so a total of eight different scenarios. This would be a very high-level look using the existing travel demand model software to analyze the impacts to roadways throughout the City if certain scenarios where implemented. On the screen before you, you see a sample of six different scenarios that could be tested using the model and today we have also included a blank sheet in your Packet that looks just like this. We're actually going to ask you to complete that for us, in order to move forward with an analysis of these sample scenarios; ideally this summer. We initially scoped six scenarios but we do think we may want to analysis additional ones moving forward if we don't think that six captures all the possible variations. So, let me explain this table to you. On the left – the first column is the crossing location. This includes all of our railroad crossings, not just the ones that are not grade separated. It also includes bike/ped only crossings at Homer and California. The existing column is what's out there today, so A means at grade for all modes, S means grades separated for all modes, B is grade separated for

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bicycle and pedestrian traffic only, and Q is for quiet zone and then X is for closed completely and then finally Y is for widening. So, W appears in the Embarcadero Row because Embarcadero Road is four lanes but the under crossing is currently only three lanes. Along the top axis, you see the six different build scenarios and we tried to organize these in a logical way but I will tell you, it was very, very difficult to do with six scenarios. So, we have what is called a low built, which I'll go through just a couple as an example and then you can ask me further questions if you have any – need some additional clarification. So, the low build scenario would close Palo Alto Avenue. It would not build the Everett Avenue/Lytton bike/ped crossing that is identified in previous planning documents. It would leave University Avenue and Homer as is, it would widen Embarcadero Road under crossing, it would close Churchill Avenue, it would retain the existing conditions at California and Oregon, it would close East Meadow Drive and it would grade separate Charleston Road. These are hypothetical, they are only intended to test the model. We are not proposing that this be considered as an alternative moving forward. It's just to help us get a handle on what happens to traffic if we were close those three at grade crossings. Then if we go all the way to six, which is the full build option B, that basically if we had all the money in the world, what would be do? We would grade separate Palo Alto Avenue, we would build a new bike/ped crossing at Everett and Lytton, we would widen Embarcadero Road, grade separate Churchill, build our new bike/ped crossing at Loma Verde/Matadero Creek and then grade separate Meadow and Charleston. Then all the ones in between are different variations. It is important to note that quiet zone and the at-grade have no effect on traffic circulation; they have no difference. We are just showing that because we really wouldn't recommend – well we wanted to include scenarios and included some minor investments at some of the at-grade crossings and those minor investments would be converting it to the quiet zone. From a traffic circulation perspective, an A and Q would not differ. The ones that are shaded in gray are the ones that are changed. The ones that are not shaded are – remain static in each of the scenarios. Then there are a couple footnotes, Chair DuBois you mentioned one of the things identified in the Rail Corridor Study was an alternative bike/ped crossing near Churchill Avenue but not at Churchill Avenue. Kellogg is one option and there is also an option at Seale Avenue that would connect to a bike boulevard corridor that goes all the way across Middlefield. The notation there at Churchill, footnote number one, it says in close proximity so it wouldn't necessarily be at Churchill Avenue. It would provide the same connectivity but it could be at a different location. Then the other footnote is at Oregon Express Way, Oregon Express Way does not currently allow pedestrian traffic so that's an important footnote for that. So, with that, I'll take any questions and then

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we've provided a blank sheet that looks just like this with your Packet and we'd love to get your feedback on additional scenarios or even just components of scenarios that you think we need to analysis from a traffic circulation perspective.

Hillary Gitelman, Planning Director: Can I just add one thing, which is that this was super hard to do and I think it's important to understand why we're trying to this. We're trying to generate some information about traffic circulation that will help the public, the City Council Rail Committee (Committee), the Council define alternatives. We didn't feel like we could walk into a discussion about alternatives simply with our purpose – our problem statement and our goals. We need to have some kind of technical information in our back pocket about how different grade crossing changes affect local circulation but that does not to say that we've hit the whole universe here. In fact, far from it and we would need to probably reanalysis even these alternatives down the road once we determine if, for example, we decide that we are going to separate Charleston. Once we determined how we would propose to do that, the trench or some other alternative. It's going to have an impact on local circulation so we would have to circle back and do some additional analysis. This is really just kind of an early scattershot approach to generating some data that could help on an alternative discussion.

James Keene, City Manager: Could I ask a framing kind of question, Mr. Chair; a statement? Actually, first of all, where is lead on the periodic table there? I can't quite find it and (inaudible). It should be eighty-two, where ever that is. Anyway, is the primary – I mean, I think it would be good too – however when we do this as a lay person's perspective, that there's some definition to these criteria and these builds. I mean is it mostly money or are there other factors that come into play for one thing? Then secondly, is the idea that you can have – I mean you could have different solutions across the spectrum there. It's not like it's necessary – not like the column's themselves are interlinked in every situation, is that correct or not?

Mr. Mello: So, the only ones that are -- well, so the answer the first question – I actually forgot the first part of your question.

Mr. Keene: (Inaudible) about these six criteria crossings. What shapes the difference between low and full build? Is it mostly (inaudible) or it is other...

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Mr. Mello: The titles that we've given them are just our effort at trying to make them more legible. We didn't just want to have one, two – one through six. We wanted to try to – so low build actually is only grade separating one and closing three so it's we called it the low build. The only ones that do have an interrelation are four, five and six. Four is full build, Phase One so four is a first step towards full build and full build A is a little less – could be a little less costly than full build B. Full build B is if we had all the money in the world, what would we want to do in our – in Staff's opinion. Four is kind of what could we do as a first step to get to full build, without precluding the full build options. Then low build, medium – low medium build and medium build are again, just names that we came up with that we thought would explain somewhat the rationale behind each scenario but there are hundreds of different variations of this. We put – what we put on there is what we think is – could be the most logical scenarios to analysis, based on previous work that's been done and kind of our understanding of the dynamics of each of the locations.

Chair DuBois: Ok, yeah Greg?

Mayor Scharff: I just want to understand this a little better in my head. There are two reasons to do grade separations. There's safety and then there's traffic flow if you are running twelve trains an hour, right? I mean that's – those seem to be the two reasons. I mean are there any other reasons you would do them?

Mr. Mello: Noise, reduced horn noise.

Mayor Scharff: Ok, so reduced horn noise, I agree with that so that's the three. You know on some of these, which we never discussed is closing during certain times when there are a lot of trains running and not closing other times; that partial close. I am thinking like Churchill and maybe one of the other ones. Is that worth looking at or is that not worth looking at? I mean why would you necessarily – you might necessarily close it for safety and the horn noise but you could use a quiet zone I suppose. You could only use it when those trains aren't running as much, which are on the weekends frankly, or that. I am just wondering if there's a reason why you might want to look at that.

Mr. Mello: I think we could look at that. I would say that the travel demand model primarily looks at the peak hours.



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Mayor Scharff: So, from a travel demand point of view, it's irrelevant and that may make sense.

Mr. Mello: Yeah, I think it could be a further – you know a next step in the analysis potentially if we determine that that might be something that we want to look at for some of the crossings.

Mayor Scharff: Ok.

Mr. Mello: Sorry, to your first point, you said traffic safety and noise. This is only going to give us information on the traffic component, not the safety or the noise.

Chair DuBois: Anybody else?

Mayor Scharff: Yeah, one other question. I realize this is looking at traffic so how do we quantify – do we have a way of quantifying safety a little bit? Is there methods that people would use? I mean obviously, you know we could decide to basically outlaw cars in Palo Alto and we'd have no traffic accidents but the cost of doing that are unacceptable. Like we would close all grade crossings and we wouldn't have car accidents on the tracks. I mean how do we decide – is their metrics people use to decide when it's a small chance that something will happen versus – I mean I am just curious.

Mr. Mello: So, the State Public Utilities Commission actually had a State-wide ranking on the safety of grade crossings throughout the State and they use that to prioritize funding. Charleston is actually ranked, unfortunately pretty high on that list. Not Charleston, sorry, Churchill Avenue is ranked pretty high on that list.

Mayor Scharff: As safe?

Mr. Mello: Unsafe.

Mayor Scharff: Oh, unsafe.

Mr. Mello: We would probably use some of those metrics to just get a handle on what's happening currently but I think as we move through the alternatives analysis process, we're going to have to look at what the estimated safety benefits would be at each of the different alternatives. So,

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quad. gate versus full grade separation versus a no built scenario for example.

Mayor Scharff: Then, I am interested in the Embarcadero notion but I always thought that was really expensive (inaudible) grade crossing but I mean do you have any idea what it costs to widen that bridge to four lanes I guess?

Mr. Mello: So, this analysis will not include any kind of cost estimation. This is just what would happen if we widened Embarcadero Road to traffic.

Mayor Scharff: And by widening it we're widening that – we're widening the bridge and putting four lanes all the way down, is that what you mean by widening?

Mr. Mello: That was the assumption here, is make it a four-lane bridge with better bike/ped accommodations as well while we are at it.

Mayor Scharff: Any sense of what that costs roughly? I mean is it...

Mr. Mello: We have not begun to look at that.

Chair DuBois: So just to be clear, I think this is helpful. We are only looking at technical metrics to create scenarios to look at a Circulation Study. This is not – there are a whole bunch of other context community metrics that are not included in this. Including cost, safety...

Mayor Scharff: Noise.

Chair DuBois: ... homes seized, any of those things, which may make these scenarios a lot less attractive other than just technical concerns. Again, when we go to like a layman, we should never be showing something like this with only these engineering considerations. So, is this kind of like the Comp. Plan scenario thing where we want six different scenarios that cover the whole range of possibilities? I mean what are we trying to get out of this if we are not considering cost and other things?

Mr. Mello: The main goal of this initial modeling is to provide us with information for when we go to the public and start to talk about alternatives and somebody asks, what would happen if we closed Churchill Avenue? We would be able to say well, you know from a traffic perspective, we estimate

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that this number of vehicles would be diverted to Embarcadero etc. It's not – it's a tool in the decision-making process. It is not a decision-making process in and of itself. It's kind of limiting the possible scenarios if it's not something that we tested. If there are some new idea that was outside of this range, we wouldn't be able to answer that question on what the impact would be.

Mr. Mello: I think we would be able to analysis addition scenarios. If we go to the public and as we get into the – delve into the alternatives development process. If a whole another scenario comes out of the woodwork, I think we definitely have the ability to analysis additional scenarios as we move forward with this. This is just the initial set of scenarios.

Mr. Keene: Could you just explain the actual process for taking this and doing the analysis and how fast that is? I mean it's not like you just have a nice little computer and you say oh well, Tom wants this. Oh, here's the results, let's change that one.

Mr. Mello: So, you want me to go into travel demand modeling process overview?

Mr. Keene: (Inaudible) understand how much it takes to change variables and factors and how quick the (inaudible).

Mr. Mello: The travel demand model has an underlying demographic layer that has traffic impact – traffic analysis zones that have a number of jobs, number of homes and all the information of what's in that particular zone. Then overlaid on that is the transportation network that has links and nodes and a rough kind of model of what our roadway network looks like. What we would do here is we would break – you know if a grade separation was going to be closed, we would break that link in the travel demand model and then run the model, which actually takes quite a bit of time. It runs multiple iterations of the model and then we would see where those trips divert to because that one grade – that link is broken.

Mayor Scharff: So, you don't run it on your laptop?

Mr. Mello: No, no. It takes...

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Mr. Keene: (Crosstalk) (inaudible) new (inaudible) computer.

Mr. Mello: So, you would actually have to build six new transportation networks to overlay on that demographic model and then run it.

Chair DuBois: We were joking but nobody has a model that optimizes and proposed the optimal solution?

Mr. Mello: Well, I think that's what we try to ascertain. I mean its...

Chair DuBois: Won't the computer figure it out and say that this would be the highest input or whatever?

Mr. Keene: I am sorry, (inaudible).

Mr. Mello: Then I wouldn't have a job.

Ms. Gitelman: I think this is an important point that what we would get out of this are the kind of illustrations that were included in your Staff Report with red and green roads near – showing traffic – relative traffic volume near the crossings. We could then use that – those little diagrams to inform the discussion about alternatives in late September when we have the community meeting.

Chair DuBois: I had a few comments that look at the quantitative measure list. I mean I know you have LOS at intersections but we have general metrics like delays to transit and delays to ped and bikes. Is there a reason we don't have delays to motor vehicles, is that – I mean is delay a different metric than LOS?

Mayor Scharff: You're on page ...

Mr. Keene: Page 2.

Mayor Scharff: ... 2.

Mr. Mello: LOS is based strictly on delay at intersections.

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Chair DuBois: Right, so we are saying that we are going to measure transit at intersections? I mean I am just trying to understand if these are different metrics or if we should include delays to motor vehicles overall and not just at intersections.

Mr. Mello: Well, travel time – trip duration would calculate delay overall. That would be how long it takes a motor vehicle to travel from point A to point B. Then LOS is a calculation of level of delay added at an intersection.

Chair DuBois: Right.

Mr. Mello: Primarily a signalized intersection.

Chair DuBois: I guess I know we're used to metrics for vehicles but you have like -- the I, J and L seem much more vague. I mean are they meant to be specified total miles traveled by bike – LOS by bike. I mean is it that specific?

Mr. Mello: So, delays to transit services would be if there is an existing cross route on a roadway, how is that – the performance of that bus route affected by a grade separation and/or a grade crossing closer. So, that would be specific to the transit service that's already operating on the corridor and it would be related to the level of service, as well as access. Bike/ped delay would primarily be from diversions so for if we were to close a grade crossing and not provide a nearby alternative, what's the added trip time between two Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZ) for a bicyclist or a pedestrian. That would be a little bit more qualitative I think, then – the model has trouble analyzing short trips because it uses TAZ's, which are fairly large areas. It only calculates trips between those so if it's an intra-TAZ trip, it would be a little harder do. So, that the – the pedestrian and bicycle measure might be a little more qualitative than quantitative.

Chair DuBois: For vehicles, if we close an intersection, aren't you also modeling the car having to go around?

Mr. Mello: Yeah, that would-be trip duration.

Mayor Scharff: Where is that on here? I don't see trip duration.

Mr. Mello: C.

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Mayor Scharff: Ok and that's for motor vehicles – (inaudible).

Mr. Mello: If someone is traveling from let's say TAZ 1 to TAZ 31 and fifty people are doing that, this is – the model will reassign them to another link and then it will calculate how much longer it's taking them to get from 1 to 31 with that grade crossing closed or with the additional delay that's imposed.

Chair DuBois: So, similarly about time of day closures, I'd emailed in – I think it's in Fremont, looking at the kind of different levels of roadways. So, if we had a separation that was for cars only but maybe not for large trucks. Is that something that we would consider in this kind of circulation model? So, basically, we didn't want trucks to go on Churchill but maybe there was a way for cars to go through.

Mr. Mello: LOS does include a percentage of truck traffic factors so...

Chair DuBois: But I am saying we should have a separation that is no trucks allowed basically.

Mr. Mello: So, if we were to do that, we would be able to analyze impacts to traffic circulation based on having few trucks or zero trucks at that grade crossing.

Chair DuBois: Yeah, so when I first saw this I was like why are they asking us to come up with these scenarios? We are not rail engineers but I think as you have explained it, I think I understand a little better. I do think we risk confusing the discussion by adding two kind of brand new bike/ped separations. I am kind of looking at how do we handle our existing crossing grade separations and if we close those, how do we shift traffic? Then we are also asking about kind of these new ones and I just feel like it does have the potential to confuse the community. I think a lot of the bicyclist would say yeah, let's add these additional bike crossing and its just kind of like new construction versus what do we do with existing situation?

Mr. Mello: So, if I could? Those two new crossings are identified in multiple adopted planning documents for the City. The only thing we are showing on here are things that have been vetted through additional planning efforts.

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Chair DuBois: I mean none of the plans show like Matadero Creek. I think we would have to seize homes to connect it (inaudible) through – I just think it's much earlier than Charleston and Meadow and those kinds of things. I don't know how my Colleagues' feel but I just feel like we're expanding the universe and it's going to make the community conversation more difficult.

Mr. Mello: Not only are those two grade separations identified in previous planning documents but there's actually potential funding sources for both of those. The Everett crossing is identified in the Stanford University Medical Center (SUMC) development agreement and then the Matadero/Loma Verde is actually on the list of fundable bike projects under Measure B. So, I think they are – might quite frankly, we on the same timeline as some of the other grade separations.

Chair DuBois: Yeah, that's even a stronger argument for just treating them like new projects. They are funded separately, we don't have to be talking about our grade separation efforts to fund those projects if they are funded. They are new construction so that's kind of my point.

Mayor Scharff: But (inaudible) traffic model.

Mr. Mello: Yeah, so again, this is only intended for model purposes and I think it is important to model how those work. If we were to close Palo Alto it does -- building a bike/ped crossing at Everett and Lytton, it does reduce the bike travel times enough where it's inconsequential. Same for if we were to close Meadow and then add the Loma Verde/Matadero Creek crossing. Does that then cancel out the added delay from the closure of Meadow for bicyclists?

Chair DuBois: The circulation makes sense but we brought it up at the workshop as well. Again, if they're new projects with their own funding, I am not sure why – it just makes the conversation more difficult, I think. In terms of scenarios, I do think we should model something that's maybe a tweak of the former Rail Study; kind of a trench as far as possible. Let's assume that we can do the two percent grade and there's electric freight.

Council Member Filseth: Well, the trench is going to be the same (inaudible).

Chair DuBois: No, not necessarily. It's only a trench as far as possible. Yeah.

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Mr. Mello: So, I think the trench would be a variation of five, without the bike/ped crossing at Churchill.

Chair DuBois: Yeah, so I was thinking a grade crossing at Churchill and then doing the Kellogg bike path. Is there any thought about widening University and looking at how that would impact? Particularly if we were going to close Alma.

Mr. Mello: University Avenue under-crossing is already four lanes but University is only two lanes on the downside and then it's three lanes on the Stanford side; further past Arboretum. I think if we were going to widen University, I think the primary goal would be to make it more bike/ped friendly. I don't know that adding additional lanes without extending the widening in either direction would have much of a benefit.

Chair DuBois: Right, so we're looking at the flow, we're not -- only looking at the underpass and not considering the roads on either side?

Mr. Mello: I don't know that -- I mean if we were to widen University to six lanes, I don't -- I mean we can certainly consider a scenario with that.

Chair DuBois: Keep it as four lanes under the underpass but maybe four lanes on the Stanford side. Again, I am just picturing that you are closing some roads off so are we not considering widening in other places?

Mr. Mello: We could certainly look at that. That would be on Stanford land primarily.

Chair DuBois: I do think that when you look at Alma, kind of a quiet zone versus closing versus grade separation. I certainly think widening Embarcadero should be evaluated in the flow.

Mayor Scharff: But aren't you going to evaluate all those that are up there already?

Chair DuBois: These are samples so I think the idea would be that we would tweak these if we were going to pick six or eight or whatever. The other one was Oregon Express Way, I guess you really have no change there; kind of a similar question I guess, of widening that would be widening the entire roadway, right?



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Mr. Mello: Yeah, I mean the under crossing is the same width as the feeding roadways; four lanes divided.

Chair DuBois: Well we have California Avenue (Cal. Ave) right there.

Council Member Fine: No, I am talking about (inaudible).

Chair DuBois: Yeah, I am just saying, near Oregon, we have Cal (inaudible) and then we're talking about Matadero Creek, which is basically both sides of the...

Council Member Fine: Right, I know but I am just saying that if we are talking about widening some of these for cars and things. Then if Oregon is the one underpass we have, why not widen it for pedestrians too? If we're going to be – if this is what we are putting out there.

Chair DuBois: The other one that I thought that wasn't on the list was – if you separated or widened Charleston, then maybe a quiet zone at Meadow if you left it as is.

Ms. Gitelman: From a circulation modeling perspective, that would be the same as number four. So, if you model it as an at-grade crossing, it functions like a quiet zone.

Chair DuBois: Yeah, I guess what I was saying is that Charleston would widen as kind of a trade off if – again, if...

Mayor Scharff: Couldn't we just narrow Charleston though?

Chair DuBois: If Meadow was blocked more.

Ms. Gitelman: By widening you are talking about something different than grade separating; the Charleston crossing?

Chair DuBois: Yeah, I think we had widening as another choice here.

Ms. Gitelman: Widening is for existing grade separated crossings. Charleston is at grade so the option we have for Charleston is either leave it at grade or separate it. It has the most traffic volume of any of our crossings so you see

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in all of these scenarios that we're suggesting that that's the one that we would prioritize separating.

Chair DuBois: Yeah, I guess there's not a choice to separate and widen.

Ms. Gitelman: That's right.

Chair DuBois: Again, I am not suggesting that we do any of these but if we were going to either close or leave at grade certain intersections, then I think other intersections might need to handle more traffic. So, not just separating but widening.

Mr. Mello: I definitely think that might be one of the information points that comes out of this exercise is what is then the load on the Charleston and is two lanes or four lanes adequate to handle that load? The first iteration of the modeling, I think we would assume that the grade separation had the same number of lanes as the approaching roadways on either side.

Mayor Scharff: Well, I mean I do want to just comment on this. I mean I think what Tom says makes sense. I mean – Charleston—didn't we just allocate ten million dollars to narrow Charleston?

Mr. Mello: The section of Charleston/Arastradero that crosses the railroad will actually be four lanes.

Mayor Scharff: Ok, but I mean isn't there other parts of Charleston that we've narrowed? That's what I always hear about from people complaining about traffic.

Mr. Mello: Yeah, there was a lane reduction on several segments of Charleston/Arastradero but actually at the grade crossing and the Alma intersection it will remain four lanes.

Mayor Scharff: Yeah, but then doesn't it narrow and then traffic stops?

Mr. Mello: It narrows when the – after the signalized intersection when the extra lanes aren't needed for the operation of the intersection. So, for this case, we would model a four-lane overcrossing if that's the existing number of lanes that cross.

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Chair DuBois: That's kind of getting to my point about that if we are just looking at the crossing but we may need to widen other parts of the network if we're shifting a lot of traffic somewhere, right?

Mr. Mello: I think this is all information that will come out of this exercise. We'll be able to sit down and say ok if we do X, Y and Z, then Charleston becomes overloaded and no longer functions. So, are there things that we could do both at the grade crossing and in the approach roads that would maybe mitigate some of that overload?

Mayor Scharff: Are you going to model what Tom's says? It may show on the grade crossing itself that you get through but all the extra cars then cause – a 1,000 yards up the street, that's where the problem is but you haven't modeled that. You've just modeled grade crossings.

Mr. Mello: No, we're modeling the entire City and how the City transportation network performs under each of these scenarios. So, it won't just be a snapshot, it will be the whole City network and what are the effects on the network of each scenario.

Chair DuBois: Before this meeting, I was thinking we should look at a kind of no impact to homes scenario. Again, I know that's not what we are considering here but if you guys look at this and say here's a scenario where we don't think we have to seize homes, that may be the low build scenario perhaps; I am not sure.

Mr. Mello: I think we're far too early in the process to make that determination as to what an alternative – what the impact of each alternative would be. We have not even got into the alternatives development process. This – the model – it will simply be a switch that's it at grade, is it grade separated or is it closed? It doesn't consider design elements of a grade crossing.

Chair DuBois: We have one public speaker who would like to speak on this, Adina Levin.

Adina Levin: Good morning. So, thank you for explaining the context about what this for traffic model testing purposes only and what it does. This needs disclaimers – this is a public document and I think that if not understood in that context it would cause a great deal of confusion. So, any additional versions of this would be very helpful to have a lot of really big print

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explaining that these are not scenarios. These are engineering exercises to look at the traffic patterns in order to prevent confusion. That's one comment and comment two relates to the thoughts about whether or not to include bicycle options. Give Palo Alto's overall goals with bicycle circulation and mode share and given what we see in other parts of the world where you build a really great bicycle network. Then wind up with middle double-digit percentages of people using bicycles for everyday trips. I think if we leave it out, then we're thinking hey, a Circulation Study is really mostly about cars but with bikes as kind of a little exceptional thing. Which is what it has been historically and if those things are included, it's really thinking about the City's goals of having bicycling as a first class and really high mode share mainstream transportation mode. I think that does make sense to include for those reasons given the City's goals. Thank you.

Chair DuBois: Yeah, just to clarify my comments. I think for Circulation Study we should include all the projects. Just when we get to the Community Workshop, we should focus on projects using grade separation money. If we have other projects that are funded, I don't want the community debating if we should fund those projects because they're funded. Any other comments (inaudible)?

Council Member Fine: Yeah, just a comment on your last comment there. I think you are right, we should be letting folks know to some degree which ones we've studied before, which are kind of the highest priority in terms of we might get funding for them, which are kind of separate but may be ancillary, right? Whether it's a bike crossing or things like that. There's kind of some – a few categories here of crossing we're looking at and whether we study them and what we are going to do going forward.

Chair DuBois: No more comments? Ok.

Mr. Keene: I just had one disclaimer, what's the turnaround time on them filling these things out and I would share that you guys don't need to worry that this – your answer will not affect you getting into the college of your choice. Ok?

Mr. Mello: Yeah, so by next Wednesday, I think would be great.

Ms. Gitelman: Yeah and Josh you can clarify this but I think it actually will take several months to do this modeling but we're hoping that we'll have

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kind of early results and little diagrams that we can share at the workshop when we schedule that.

Chair DuBois: Yeah, so to echo the public comments. I think we have to be very careful about how we present that information. Alright, so let's move on.

## **NO ACTION TAKEN**

### Future Meetings and Agendas

Chair DuBois: Any interagency communications? Future agendas, so I guess our next meeting ...

James Keene, City Manager: I would just say that it's a little bit off point but just since it's rail, we have some kind of ongoing conversations with Caltrain in general. We've got some feedback that I think we need to provide to them on more of the safety issue. We're talking and working with them about potential installation of west side fencing. Where we've got gaps so we'll be reporting to you on those things in the future, thanks.

Chair DuBois: I also – you talked several times about this Union Pacific letter. I guess San Francisco and San Jose have sent theirs.

Mr. Keene: Help me with that because I was looking at that yesterday. Did we get a specific directive from you all on that?

Chair DuBois: I think we did, I thought we voted.

Joshuah Mello, Chief Transportation Official: Yeah, the directive was that Chair DuBois would provide the final letter after the Local Policy Maker Group (LPMG) made all of the edits and then we would bring it to Council.

Mr. Keene: We have the letter that was signed by San Francisco and whoever else, right? So, that's the model for the letter.

Chair DuBois: Yeah, the Cities basically decided to send their own letters, which I think we said at the meeting. So, we have a draft and we have the Mayors of San Francisco and San Jose sign the same letter.

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Mr. Keene: So, is there any reason that we just don't convert this to a letter for the Mayor to sign? We can do that (inaudible).

Mr. Mello: So, if we want to consider that the final version, we can move that forward.

Chair DuBois: Yeah, let's do that.

Mr. Keene: We'll do that. I've got it. Do you have a copy of it?

Mr. Mello: We can get it.

Mr. Keene: I've got it. Ok, thanks.

Chair DuBois: So, I have out next meeting as August 23<sup>rd</sup> and then talking to the City Clerk, there's a question about whether we are going to meet twice a month or not, I guess in the fall. We've talked about that.

Mayor Scharff: So, I can't be here on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Council Member Fine: I may not be able to also.

Mr. Keene: Is there potentially an earlier? Maybe the week you come back, the 14<sup>th</sup>? I mean 14<sup>th</sup> is a Monday.

Mayor Scharff: So, that works for me that week. I could do Wednesday morning that week, the 16<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Keene: I think that would be better for the Staff if we could get you sooner than later, right?

Mr. Mello: Yes.

Council Member Fine: I can do the 16<sup>th</sup>.

Chair DuBois: So, can you do that Eric? 16<sup>th</sup>? Ok, so we'll move the from the 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup>.

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Mr. Mello: That works much better for from a workflow perspective because we're going to Planning & Transportation Commission (PTC) on the 9<sup>th</sup> and then Council on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

Chair DuBois: Ok.

Mayor Scharff: Can we do 8:30 instead of 8:00?

Chair DuBois: That's really hard for me. If we could stick to 8:00.

Mayor Scharff: Alright.

Chair DuBois: It just impacts my work day. Then this other question, do we want to commit to twice a month September and October?

Mayor Scharff: I don't want to commit now. I mean if Staff thinks we need to have the meeting, we can have the meetings but I don't want to just say have the meetings if we don't have anything to do.

Chair DuBois: I think it's a – yeah, schedule issue. So, as far as I know, the City Clerk has not scheduled any meeting from September on. It's up to Staff, I mean should we stick with the fourth Wednesday?

Hillary Gitelman, Planning Director: Yeah, I think that would be our preference just to stick with one a month and then if or some reason, there's a month where we need to schedule an extra one we could do it at the time.

Chair DuBois: Great, ok. I guess the agenda for that meeting will be following up on the PTC discussion. Great.

Mr. Keene: One, two, three, four – just – I mean not to get into micro issues but if the 27<sup>th</sup> is the fourth Wednesday, the Mayor and I will not be here that day. So, I don't know if there's...

Mayor Scharff: That's the 27<sup>th</sup> of September?

Mr. Keene: Yes.

Mayor Scharff: Yeah, we won't be here.

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Mr. Keene: Whether or not we could think about looking at the 20<sup>th</sup> as a possibility. The week before if we're just sticking with Wednesdays.

Chair DuBois: I can do the 20<sup>th</sup>.

Mayor Scharff: Yeah, I can do the 20<sup>th</sup> as well. Oh wait, wait, wait, we were going to be out – we're out that week as well I think. I don't think that works.

Chair DuBois: Should we just leave it on the 27<sup>th</sup> then?

Mayor Scharff: Either move it to the 13<sup>th</sup> or do it on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Keene: Yeah, your call.

Chair DuBois: When does – is Staff going to have...

Mr. Mello: Well, the 13<sup>th</sup> could be appealing because we could -- if we hold the public meeting in the latter half of September, we could use that as kind of the final check on the agenda and other elements of the workshop.

Chair DuBois: Yep, can everybody do that?

Mayor Scharff: Yeah. (Crosstalk).

Chair Dubois: Then October 25<sup>th</sup>? Alright, let's say then meeting adjourned. Thank you very much.

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 9:37 A.M.