



PALO ALTO
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

25 Churchill Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94306

Office of the Superintendent

To: Ed Shikada, City Manager
From: Don Austin, Superintendent of Schools
Date: February 20, 2020
Subject: Potential Closing of Churchill Avenue

The Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) has not taken an official position regarding proposed options to mitigate increased rail traffic. As the Superintendent of Schools, I want to provide some context about District use of Churchill Avenue (Churchill).

On any given day, Palo Alto High School (Paly) averages a little under 1,000 bicycles. The majority of bicycles enter from Churchill, although exact data is not easily obtainable. Clearly, student safety is the top concern of the District and a full closure of Churchill may negatively impact student safety related to bicycle commuters.

PAUSD deploys 22 busses each day to various parts of Palo Alto and East Palo Alto. Currently, our busses cross Alma Street at Churchill over 20 times per day as part of routine business. This does not include athletic or other extra-curricular trips. Our only entrance to our transportation yard is on Churchill. Practically speaking, a closure of Churchill would force every bus onto El Camino to make a right or left turn.

Our Maintenance and Operations fleet crosses Alma and Churchill approximately 175 times per day. This includes vans, trucks, and trailers. As described for our busses, the maintenance yard also depends upon a single entry/exit point on Churchill.

It is our understanding that proposals exist or may arise restricting large vehicle access to some mitigation options. PAUSD would contend that restrictions to large vehicles would negatively impact our busses and maintenance vehicles.

Finally, while traffic is the main focus of mitigation efforts, PAUSD would also like to raise the point that increased rail use negatively impacts the learning environment at Paly. Current rail use is already a major distraction for students in classes paralleling the rail line. The staff and students at Paly would benefit greatly by any mitigating efforts connected to sound barriers.

PAUSD is thankful for the efforts of our City leadership and the volunteers serving on the committee to propose solutions.