

City of Palo Alto

*Department of Planning and
Community Environment*

August 13, 2008

**Resident
1467 College Ave
Palo Alto, CA 94306**

Re: College Terrace Traffic Calming Study Project Update

Dear Resident:

The City of Palo Alto staff has been working closely with the residents of the College Terrace neighborhood and the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) members beginning in 2003, when the College Terrace Traffic Calming Plan was initiated. The intent of the plan was to develop solutions for the traffic impacts identified through traffic data collection and residents' experience. Proposed improvements were focused on enhancing traffic safety while reducing excessive motor vehicle speeds, cut through motor vehicle travel, and traffic noise. The goal of the College Terrace Neighborhood Traffic Calming Plan was to tailor solutions to specific locations and to help residents and non-residents recognize that a comprehensive traffic management plan can benefit everybody through improved safety and livability.

Following Council approval, traffic circles, speed tables and other traffic calming measures were installed in late 2006 on the border and interior streets of the College Terrace neighborhood. The one-year trial of the College Terrace Traffic Calming Plan is now complete, and an after study has been commissioned by the City to assess the effectiveness of the traffic calming measures, both in terms of traffic safety as well as meeting neighborhood expectations.

The goal of the second phase of this project is to conduct a follow up evaluation of the traffic calming measures. A new Project Advisory Committee (PAC) made up of 11 residents appointed by the College Terrace Resident's Association (CTRA) Board, City staff and consultants was formed in January 2008.

Before and after data has been collected for both speeds and traffic volumes. Results are shown in the attached table for the before and after volumes and the 85 (%) percentile speeds (speed at which 85% of the drivers are driving). Overall numbers show that there have been significant decreases in both speed and volume, with some increases at various locations throughout the neighborhood. The results in the table will be discussed in more detail at the first neighborhood meeting to be scheduled in late fall 2008.

250 Hamilton Avenue
P.O. Box 10250
Palo Alto, CA 94303
650.329.2441
650.329.2154

Resident input on the traffic calming measures has been collected by the PAC and the CTRA. Overall feedback on the speed tables on Stanford and California Avenue has been positive. The City has also become aware that there are neighborhood-wide reservations about the design and effectiveness of the traffic circles on College Avenue. The traffic circles are generating incremental safety issues for drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists. One of the major concerns being the ambiguity of the circles, where drivers approaching the circle don't know who has the right-of-way or which direction an approaching vehicle intends to go. Another concern expressed is that cars are encroaching into the pedestrian crosswalks as they try to maneuver around the circle. Some of the other concerns with the circles are reduced visibility at night, unsafe vehicle speeds and cars taking short-cuts by using the wrong lane of traffic.

The next steps in this project are for the PAC and the City to develop another viable alternative for traffic calming measures to be implemented on College Avenue. The City would then present this plan to the residents at the next neighborhood meeting, after which a neighborhood survey on the permanent retention of the existing traffic calming devices and/or a new traffic calming trial with the new traffic calming features would be circulated for a neighborhood vote.

In the meantime, the PAC has requested that the City implement the following two measures below, as an interim solution while the PAC continues to work with the City to develop a feasible alternative for College Avenue. The City has met with the CTRA Board and they are in support of this interim change until the PAC and the City work to find another viable alternative on College Avenue.

1. Remove the traffic circle at Hanover/College and restore the original 4-way stop.
2. Reverse the stop signs to their original locations at Columbia/College Avenue.

The City plans to have this work done prior to the start of school. We have tentatively scheduled this work for the weeks of August 18th and the 25th.

If you have any questions please email me at Shahla.yazdy@cityofpaloalto.org or call me at (650) 617-3151. Information on the project will also be posted as it becomes available at the following website:

http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/knowzone/city_projects/transportation/college_terrace.asp.

Sincerely,
Shahla Yazdy
Transportation Engineer

Enclosure

COLLEGE TERRACE SPEED AND VOLUME DATA

Roadway	From	To	Before Volumes (2005-2006)	After Volumes 2007	% Change in Volume	85% Speed Before (2005)	85% Speed after (2007)	% Change in Speed
Stanford	El Camino Real	Yale	9,963	8,852	-13%	NA	28.5	NA
Stanford	Wellesley	Oberlin	8,842	8,233	-7%	33.5	31	-8%
Stanford	Dartmouth	Bowdoin	8,687	7,733	-12%	32	29	-10%
Cambridge	El Camino Real	Yale	1,369	1,441	5%	24	23.8	-1%
California	El Camino Real	Yale	5,154	6,237	17%	24.5	24	-2%
California	Cornell	Princeton	4,006	4,292	7%	34	31	-10%
California	Oberlin	Harvard	4,158	4,634	10%	34	31.5	-8%
California	Dartmouth	Columbia	1,724	1,641	-5%	NA	27.5	NA
Yale	California	Cambridge	1,456	912	-60%	24	23	-4%
Princeton	College	California	508	525	3%	NA	27.3	NA
Oberlin	Stanford	College	703	755	7%	28.5	27.8	-3%
Harvard	Stanford	College	387	304	-27%	NA	26.8	NA
Hanover	Stanford	College	1,012	960	-5%	26.5	26.3	-1%
Columbia	College	California	518	586	12%	27.5	26.8	-3%
Bowdoin	College	California	210	193	-9%	NA	24.8	NA
Amherst	College	California	232	210	-11%	NA	24	NA
College	Yale	Williams	2,155	1,744	-24%	26	24	-8%
College	Princeton	Oberlin	1,716	1,691	-2%	27.5	26	-6%
College	Hanover	Columbia	932	871	-7%	24.5	25.5	4%