

neighborhood study was identified on a list of Council-approved neighborhood studies as far back as 1979. A Planned Community zone project at the corner of Lytton and Waverley coincided with increased neighborhood concern about traffic impacts of downtown development. The developer of that project offered a public benefit in the form of funds for the City to hire a transportation consultant to conduct a traffic calming study for Downtown North.

Staff began the project in January 1999 with selection of a project advisory committee (PAC). The PAC is composed of five representatives of Downtown North (including officials of the neighborhood association), one representative of the Lytton neighborhood on the east side of Middlefield, a downtown business community representative, and City staff from the Transportation Division, Public Works Department and Fire Department. Prospective transportation consulting firms were interviewed by a subset of the PAC. Dowling Associates was selected to conduct the study.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The purpose of the Downtown North traffic calming project is to identify traffic problems in the neighborhood and propose several alternative traffic calming plans that would address those problems. Later phases of the project are the design and implementation of trial and permanent traffic calming measures. This study specifically excludes parking problems, which are being addressed by separate City staff efforts focussing on new parking structures and a residential permit parking plan. The consultant and PAC were informed that the traffic calming plans would not be designed to directly address the parking intrusion problem. A residential permit parking plan, if and when implemented, would further reduce traffic problems in the neighborhood.

Data Collection. In the spring of 1999, the consultant began the project with collection of traffic data including speeds, volumes, intersection counts and license plate surveys (the latter to identify the extent of shortcutting traffic, or “through” traffic). In addition, residents were asked to return a survey card on which they could describe traffic problems as they experienced them. A summary of the findings is included as Attachment 2. The full Technical Memorandum is available at the project web site www.city.palo-alto.ca.us/downtownnorth/.

Residents have been given ample opportunities to receive information about the project and to contact project staff. A telephone voice mail box and e-mail address were established. Project status and reports were published on the project web site listed above. Telephone numbers of City staff and neighborhood representatives were published. In addition, several neighborhood mailings, surveys, and meetings were conducted, as described below.

Neighborhood Meetings. The first neighborhood meeting was repeated on two successive evenings July 14 and 15, 1999. The purpose of the meeting was for the consultant to present

the traffic data and resident survey results, and describe various traffic calming measures that could be considered for the neighborhood. The meeting concluded with residents forming small groups to develop traffic calming plans for the neighborhood. Approximately 70 residents attended these meetings. During the next several weeks, the consultant developed four initial alternative traffic calming plans based on the traffic data and resident input. The plans were presented at the second set of neighborhood meetings on August 11 and 12, and were also mailed to each resident and property owner with a survey form. Approximately 50 residents attended the second set of meetings. About 200 resident responses were received in response to the mailing.

Four Initial Alternatives. The four initial traffic calming plans range from a relatively “mild” speed control plan consisting primarily of traffic circles, to the most “aggressive” plan of peripheral street closures that targets shortcutting traffic. At the August meetings, residents requested that a fifth plan be developed that included a blend of traffic circles and street closures. At the request of neighborhood representatives on the PAC, speed humps were not included in any plan. This preference to exclude speed humps was also evident at the neighborhood meetings. Brief descriptions of the four plans are contained in Attachment 3. More detail is provided in the Final Traffic Report at www.city.palo-alto.ca.us/downtownnorth/. Resident responses to these plans were tallied informally. About 85 percent of residents responding to the mailing or speaking at the August meeting favored adopting one of the traffic calming plans, and 15 percent favored doing nothing. Plan 1 (peripheral street closures) and Plan 3 (traffic circles) were preferred by 35 percent each. The remaining 15 percent was split about evenly between Plans 2 (internal diverters) and 4 (diverters/traffic circles). Residents thought that the internal diverters of Plans 2 and 4 were too confusing.

Three Final Options. The consultant then refined the four initial alternatives to three final options, illustrated in Attachment 4. The final options were designed to address the deficiencies and desires expressed by residents and the PAC with regard to Plans 1 – 4. Detailed descriptions of Options 1- 3 are available in the Final Traffic Report at the project web site. The PAC reviewed the final three options and, upon considerable deliberation, selected one “Preferred Option” that would go forward to neighborhood residents for a formal vote. The PAC purposely did not select a second choice as a back up plan. Neighborhood representatives on the PAC were confident that the Preferred Option is what the neighborhood desired, and they thought that inclusion of a backup plan would dilute support for the Preferred Option.

Preferred Option. The Preferred Option is based on Option 2, and is illustrated and described in Attachment 5. The option consists primarily of internal street closures, reflecting the residents’ strong desire to substantially reduce shortcutting traffic, yet avoid diverters that residents thought were more confusing than full closures. Reduction of traffic volumes would also reduce the incidences of speeding. The PAC preferred internal street closures over the

peripheral street closures of Option 1. Even though peripheral street closures would be more effective at reducing shortcutting traffic, the PAC felt that it was important to avoid the “fortress” look of peripheral street closures. Internal closures, as opposed to peripheral closures, would permit residents to enter and exit the neighborhood from any street and would not close all shortcutting routes, thereby adding less traffic to the Lytton/Middlefield intersection. This would lessen the possibility of traffic diversion to the adjacent Lytton neighborhood. (Refer to a separate discussion of the Lytton neighborhood in the next section of this report.)

In May 2000, Downtown North residents (excluding non-resident property owners) received a summary of the project and a full description of the Preferred Option (refer to Attachment 5). Included was a survey card with three response options: (i) Support the Preferred Option, (ii) Something should be done, but not the Preferred Option, and (iii) Nothing should be done. An informational letter (not including the survey card) was sent to residents of two adjacent neighborhoods—the Lytton neighborhood on the east side of Middlefield Road, and the “Webster” neighborhood bounded by Lytton, Middlefield, Webster, and University. Twenty-six percent of Downtown North households (444) responded to the survey—a higher response rate than the initial surveys for this project, but a lower rate than past traffic calming projects in other neighborhoods. The 444 responses were as follows:

“Support the Preferred Option”	60%
“Something should be done, but not the Preferred Option”	17%
“Nothing should be done”	23%

Because street closure plans are typically very controversial, staff considers a 60 percent favorable rating to be a sign of strong support for the Preferred Option. Still, the majority of Downtown North residents have not spoken up. It is likely that residents outside the neighborhood (especially many in the adjacent Lytton neighborhood) will not support the plan.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Comprehensive Plan

Traffic calming is strongly supported in the Comprehensive Plan. “Traffic calming refers to projects that make permanent, physical changes to streets to slow traffic and/or reduce volumes, thus improving their safety and addressing residents’ concerns.” (Comprehensive Plan, p. T-19). Policy T-34 states: “Implement traffic calming measures to slow traffic on local and collector residential streets Include traffic circles and other traffic calming devices among these measures.” Even though a goal of traffic calming is to reduce volumes (especially shortcutting traffic), Policy T-33 of the Comprehensive Plan cautions “Keep all neighborhood streets open unless there is a demonstrated safety or overwhelming through-traffic problem and there are no acceptable alternatives, or unless a closure would increase

the use of alternative transportation modes.”

In selecting the Preferred Option, Downtown North residents recognized that closing streets is controversial and that obtaining City approval for street closures is considerably more difficult than for other type of traffic calming measures. Staff has advised residents of this difficulty and of the Comprehensive Plan position that street closures are considered a measure of last resort. Nevertheless, residents who have so far participated and responded in this study feel that the current and potential through traffic problems in the neighborhood warrant this type of plan.

At the September 27, 2000 Planning and Transportation Commission meeting, staff’s proposed citywide neighborhood traffic calming program was discussed. Commissioners stated that the primary objective of the traffic calming program should be to reduce speeds, crashes and cut-through traffic, with particular emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle safety (the reference to “volume reduction” was removed). The majority of Commissioners were opposed to the use of street closures for the sole purpose of volume reduction. Though staff does not unanimously support street closures in general, staff believes that the proposed use of street closures in this specific project meets the Commission’s above revised objective of the City’s traffic calming program, as well as the criteria of Comprehensive Plan Policy T-33--safety, through traffic, alternate modes—as follows:

Safety. Staff has investigated the crash history of this neighborhood for the 5½-year period between January 1995 and July 2000. Three intersections stand out as needing safety improvement. Two of these intersections lie within the neighborhood: Bryant/Everett (on the Bryant Street Bike Boulevard)—8 accidents; and Emerson/Everett—5 accidents. A total of 42 accidents occurred within the neighborhood (not including boundary intersections along Lytton, Middlefield and Alma). Nine of these involved pedestrians and bicyclists. The third intersection requiring safety improvement lies on the neighborhood boundary: Middlefield/Everett—32 accidents. Staff has submitted this location to the Traffic Safety Evaluation Program of the Institute of Transportation Studies (U.C. Berkeley). Analysts will provide staff an evaluation of safety improvements that could be instituted at this location. Refer to Attachment 7 for specific discussion of this intersection.

There are potentially several ways to improve safety at these locations, one of which is to simply reduce the number of conflicts at each location by reducing the traffic volume. The proposed traffic calming plan will reduce the volume of shortcutting traffic throughout the neighborhood. Depending on the outcome of the special analysis for the Middlefield/Everett intersection, staff might consider implementation of additional measures at that location.

Through Traffic. Through traffic percentages range up to 60 percent of daily traffic volumes on Downtown North streets, not including employees and customers of downtown businesses who travel through the neighborhood to park all day (refer to Final Technical Memorandum,

Figure 7). The consultant estimates that through traffic may reach up to 75 percent of daily volumes when the trips of non-resident parkers are included (*Ibid.* p. 13). Staff considers this level of through traffic as “overwhelming.” Downtown North streets are attractive for through drivers because they can avoid one or more congested downtown intersections and can reduce trip length by up to six blocks. Many residents believe that there are no effective alternatives to street closures when it comes to substantially removing through traffic from the neighborhood.

Alternate Modes. The Bryant Street bicycle boulevard traverses this neighborhood. Crash history and citizen complaints indicate that this route would be improved by the Preferred Option. More importantly, the *Palo Alto Bicycle Plan*, currently under development, identifies Everett Avenue as a segment of highly desirable new east-west bicycle boulevard. This is precisely the street on which the highest crash intersections are located. The three proposed street closures on Everett would greatly benefit this potential new bicycle boulevard. Indeed, even if no traffic calming plan were implemented in Downtown North, this potential new bicycle boulevard would probably require one or more street closures to offset the likelihood of increased through traffic volumes as a result of stop sign removals.

Neighborhood Geography. One of the biggest drawbacks of street closures is the potential diversion of large amounts of through traffic to other local residential streets. The Preferred Option is designed to reduce volumes on *all* Downtown North streets, to varying degrees. More importantly, this neighborhood is almost unique in being bounded on all four sides by arterial streets and San Francisquito Creek. Through traffic diverted out of the neighborhood will be placed primarily back on arterial streets. Staff and the consultant believe that the potential for diversion to other local streets is small. Nevertheless, residents of the adjacent Lytton neighborhood to the east are not so convinced, as discussed in a later section of this report.

Street Hierarchy. Some residents believe that street closures (or any traffic calming measures) are inappropriate because public streets should be open to all members of the public for all driving purposes. However, there is a long history in city planning and traffic engineering that different streets have different purposes. This is supported in Policy T-24 of the Comprehensive Plan: “Maintain a hierarchy of streets that includes freeways, expressways, arterials, residential arterials, collectors, and local streets.” Each classification is defined in the Comprehensive Plan. A local street is a “minor roadway that provides access to adjacent properties only.” An arterial street and a residential arterial street are each a “major roadway mainly serving through-traffic. . . .” Thus, local streets are not designed nor intended to carry large amounts of through traffic. From planning, engineering and safety perspectives, it is appropriate to restrict local streets to low levels of through traffic; and to induce that traffic to travel on arterial streets.

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT ISSUES

Arterial Improvements

The consultant recommends three improvements to the arterial network surrounding the Downtown North neighborhood, as an integral part of any traffic calming plan. The purpose of the improvements is to enhance the ability of the arterial network to carry existing traffic as well as through traffic diverted out of the neighborhood. As shown in Attachment 5, the daily volumes on Middlefield (north of Lytton) and Lytton (west of Middlefield) are expected to increase between 13 to 18 percent over existing volumes if the Preferred Option is installed. A similar increase would be expected on Alma (north of Lytton). The greatest impact of these increases will be at the intersections of Lytton/Alma and Lytton/Middlefield.

The consultant has identified arterial and intersection improvements to handle this increased traffic flow. No roadway widening is proposed. The improvements, described in Attachment 6, are: (i) a new signal coordination plan for Lytton between Alma and Middlefield; (ii) dedicated left- and right-turn lanes at Lytton/Alma and new protected left-turn signal phase for southbound Alma to eastbound Lytton traffic; (iii) additional eastbound Lytton left-turn lane to northbound Middlefield with exclusive eastbound signal phase. The Lytton/Middlefield improvement is the most important, as it is designed to make it much easier for eastbound Lytton traffic to turn northbound on Middlefield. It will also make it more difficult for westbound Lytton drivers to exit the Lytton neighborhood (many of the drivers on Lytton east of Middlefield are actually short-cutters bypassing the congestion on University Avenue). The City Traffic Engineer has approved a trial implementation of these three arterial improvements. Staff recommends that they be implemented *before* any trial traffic calming plan in Downtown North. Even if a traffic calming plan were not implemented in Downtown North, these arterial improvements would help keep through traffic on the major arterial network instead of the local neighborhood streets.

Lytton Neighborhood Impacts

The Lytton neighborhood is located immediately east of the Downtown North neighborhood, bounded by Middlefield, Chaucer, University and San Francisquito Creek (refer to map, Attachment 1). Staff conducted a traffic calming study of this neighborhood in the mid-1990s in response to residents' concerns about shortcutting traffic. Three speed humps, a traffic circle and a median island were installed as a result of the study. A resident of this neighborhood is a member of the Downtown North PAC and has kept Lytton residents well informed of the Downtown North study. Staff has included the Lytton neighborhood in its mailings for Downtown North. Some Lytton neighborhood residents feel that they are currently inundated by shortcutting traffic, despite the presence of traffic calming measures. Some residents believe that the current measures are not sufficient, and that street closures and diverters are the only measures that would solve their problems. They also realize that, if such measures were proposed, Chaucer Street between University and Hamilton Avenues, and maybe Hamilton itself, would need protection. These residents are especially wary of the projected 18 percent increase in traffic on the arterial portion of Lytton Avenue (west of

Middlefield) that would result from the Recommended Preferred Option. Lytton neighborhood residents view any additional traffic on the arterial section of Lytton as a possible source of new through traffic flow on their portion of Lytton and its continuation as Palo Alto Avenue to Chaucer Street.

After considerable staff deliberation and discussion with the Lytton neighborhood representative, staff has agreed to recommend a new traffic calming study of that neighborhood. Assuming approval by the Commission and Council, this study would begin at approximately the same time as a trial of the Downtown North plan. The Downtown North trial would not be materially delayed by the new Lytton neighborhood study. The southeastern boundary of the Lytton neighborhood study would be expanded beyond the former study limits to include Chaucer south of University, and Hamilton. Staff will measure baseline traffic volumes throughout the Lytton neighborhood (as well as in Downtown North) before the Downtown North trial begins. Measurements will be repeated near the conclusion of the trial. If undesirable impacts caused by the Downtown North plan were found in the Lytton neighborhood (as determined by the before-after volume measurements), the problem could be solved by identifying new traffic calming measures for the Lytton neighborhood as part of that new study. Another solution, which Downtown North representatives feel should be considered only as a last resort, would be to modify the Downtown North plan. It is important to point out that the proposed Lytton neighborhood traffic calming study would not be limited just to mitigating any problems created by the Downtown North plan. It would also address existing traffic problems that would be identified at the beginning of the study. Staff believes that this commitment to the Lytton neighborhood will respond to residents' concerns about the potential negative impacts of the Downtown North plan on their neighborhood.

Modifications to Preferred Option

Based on further staff discussion on the Preferred Option and residents' comments provided during the recent survey, staff will make four changes to the Preferred Option, and refer to it as the "Recommended Preferred Option," shown in Figure 1. First, the residents of Byron Street between Palo Alto and Hawthorne Avenues were strongly opposed to removal of the existing Byron Street closure at Palo Alto Avenue. The Byron Street closure consists of landscaped islands with a removable steel bollard and has been in place since the 1970s. This closure would become redundant with the proposed closure of Palo Alto Avenue at Middlefield, but it could remain in place with no added cost or adverse consequences. Thus, in response to residents' concerns, the Preferred Option will be modified to retain the Byron Street closure.

Second, a private alley was overlooked when a closure was proposed on Everett between Ramona and Emerson. This alley is now shown in the Recommended Preferred Option. The alley is 20 feet wide with one-way traffic flow from Emerson to Ramona, and provides access to garages of the single-family home development on the former Times-Tribune site.

This alley could become a potential bypass of the street closure. The project consultant does not believe that this alley will become a problem. But the potential problem could be avoided by moving the proposed closure one block west to replace the gateway feature on Everett between Ramona and Emerson, at the boundary of the commercial and residential zones on Everett. Staff believes that this latter location is preferable for other reasons as well. This change is included in Figure 1.

Third, in the interest of reducing the project cost, the gateway proposed for Palo Alto Avenue at Alma will be eliminated. The purpose of a gateway is to provide a visual cue and a slowing effect for entering traffic. Left turns into this block of Palo Alto Avenue from the direction of El Camino Real are already prohibited, and there are few northbound right turns. Thus, there is not sufficient entering traffic to warrant constructing a gateway.

Fourth, due to cost and maintenance considerations, staff will modify the Preferred Option to replace “mini-park street closures” with a simpler design. The simpler design could be similar to existing street closures in Evergreen Park in terms of the extent of landscaped area. This would represent a substantial reduction from the proposed 80- to 100-foot long mini-parks. The design of the emergency vehicle passage has still not been determined. For more discussion on design issues, please refer to the next subsection of this report and Attachment 8.

Staff made these four modifications to the Preferred Option after the neighborhood survey results were tabulated. Residents have been made aware of these changes by means of staff’s letter informing them of the upcoming Commission hearing on this project.

have been informed that the proposed plan could increase medical and/or fire response times (refer to “Description of the Preferred Option” in Attachment 5).

The Transportation Division did not include a Police Department representative on the PAC. Staff expects that the street closures included in the Preferred Option will be just as permeable for drivers of police vehicles as for fire vehicles. Nevertheless, the number of proposed street closures would disrupt the ability of the police to routinely drive through the neighborhood on patrols or while actively pursuing suspects. The Police Department supports the proposed closure at Palo Alto Avenue and Middlefield (as a traffic safety improvement), but is generally opposed to closing streets for traffic calming purposes. Specifically, police often use Everett and Hawthorne as east-west routes because the major downtown streets (such as Lytton) are often too congested. The Police Department expects that congestion will increase in the future due to growth downtown and at Stanford, and is concerned that Downtown North through traffic will be diverted to Lytton, University and Hamilton. These are two- to three-lane heavily traveled arterials that are currently difficult for emergency responses. Any additional traffic would tend to increase response times to the Downtown area. The Police Department prefers speed humps and traffic circles because Downtown North streets would still remain open.

RESOURCE IMPACTS

Financing of Trial and Permanent Installations

Staff has developed conceptual cost estimates for the trial and permanent installations of the Preferred Option. There is wide variation in the cost of the permanent installation depending on the design quality and the required emergency vehicle passage elements, as explained in Attachment 8. Staff will begin the design of permanent measures after Commission and Council approve the trial installation and will continue designing during the trial. To the greatest extent feasible, staff recommends that sources of funding for the permanent project be determined *before* the trial begins. Thus, assuming a successful trial, permanent installation of the plan could proceed quickly after the trial is finished.

A trial installation of the Recommended Preferred Option includes (a) 11 temporary street closures and gateways, (b) permanent modifications to signals and lane geometry at two arterial intersections, and (c) approximately 35 sets of before-after traffic volume counts in the Downtown North and Lytton neighborhoods. The total cost of the trial, including all of the above elements, is estimated to be \$80,000, including design and construction. The proposed concurrent Lytton neighborhood traffic calming study is estimated to cost \$75,000 (not including the cost to install any trial and permanent traffic calming measures that might be recommended). Assuming a successful outcome of the trial, with no substantive changes,

design and installation of permanent street closures and gateways at 11 locations would range from approximately \$250,000 to \$750,000, depending on the design. The lower figure is for “budget” designs (i.e., gutters remain open, landscaped area is minimal, not irrigated). The higher figure is for “high quality” designs (i.e., new storm drain connections, larger landscaped areas, irrigation, and automatic bollards). All cost estimates assume that design and installation would be performed under contract. The Public Works Engineering Division does not have the resources to undertake the major design effort required for this project. The Transportation Division would manage the design and construction contracts.

Staff proposes that all these items, totaling \$405,000 to \$905,000, be funded through the FY2001-02 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Planning for the 2001-02 CIP begins at the end of this calendar year, with funds becoming available July 1, 2001. Assuming that use of CIP funds were approved, the earliest that a trial could be implemented would be summer of 2001. Utility Department construction in Downtown North in summer 2001 could delay implementation of the trial.

Maintenance

As is the case for all past traffic calming projects, the 11 traffic calming measures that comprise the Recommended Preferred Option would add an additional unfunded and unstaffed maintenance burden on the Public Works Operations and Community Services Parks and Golf Divisions. Even with traffic calming measures designed to minimize maintenance, there must still be occasional maintenance of signing, striping, curbs, irrigation systems and landscaping. A rough estimate of the annual cost of high-quality regular maintenance (including staffing) is about five percent of the capital cost of the installation, or approximately \$38,000 annually for the most expensive design option.

To date, the City has not encouraged or required citizen participation in landscape watering or maintenance. In some Palo Alto neighborhoods, however, citizens have informally taken over these tasks, presumably because the City’s lack of landscape maintenance has resulted in some unsightly traffic calming devices. In other cities, residents have been allowed and encouraged to maintain traffic calming landscaping. Even with citizen participation in landscape maintenance, however, a sizable portion of the maintenance workload would remain for City crews. As with past traffic calming measures, the design will accommodate machine street sweeping operations to the greatest degree possible. Even with optimal designs, experience has shown that curb areas in the immediate vicinity of gateways, bulbouts, and street closures are not usually accessible by street cleaning machines. Hand sweeping is required in these areas, which is not regularly scheduled.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Alternatives to staff's recommendations fall into three areas: funding, the recommended traffic calming plan, and the Lytton neighborhood traffic calming study.

Funding

Given the number and expense of infrastructure project

As mentioned in “Project Overview,” residents considered many alternative traffic calming plans early in the study process. An initial informal neighborhood survey found reasonably strong support for two of the initial four plans: Plan 1 (peripheral street closures) and Plan 3 (traffic circles), which are illustrated in Attachment 3. Plan 3 was passed over by PAC members and residents because of higher cost and less effective through traffic reduction. The total cost of trial and permanent installations for Plan 3 (using high-quality permanent designs) is \$1 million, compared to \$750,000 for the Recommended Preferred Option. One reason for the cost differential is the use of 22 traffic calming measures for Plan 3 (not including the Palo Alto Ave/Alma gateway) compared to 11 for the Recommended Preferred Option. Plan 3, with 14 traffic circles, is aimed at speed reduction; reduction of through traffic is obtained as a consequence of speed reduction. Overall reduction of through traffic is about 35 percent with Plan 3, compared to about 60 percent for the Recommended Preferred Option.

Later in the study process, a reduced-cost version of Plan 3 was produced, labeled Option 3, (refer to Attachment 4). Option 3 has a total of 13 traffic calming measures (not including the Palo Alto Ave/Alma gateway), with six traffic circles. The total cost of trial and permanent installations of Option 3 (using high-quality permanent designs) is approximately \$650,000, compared to \$750,000 for the Recommended Preferred Option. Overall reduction of through traffic is about 25 percent with Option 3, compared to about 60 percent for the Recommended Preferred Option. Option 3 is aimed primarily at speed reduction; reduction of through traffic is obtained as a consequence of speed reduction. Neighborhood residents who participated in the surveys seemed to prefer a plan that emphasized through traffic reduction (with speed reduction as a consequence) rather than vice-versa.

If Commission and Council were looking for a potentially viable, cost-effective plan as an alternative to street closures, the only possibility that staff can identify at this time is Option 3. Staff believes that any decision to pass up the Recommended Preferred Option in favor of Option 3, or some other plan, would require further engineering work to better define traffic impacts, as well as a new survey of residents to determine their support for a different plan.

Lytton Neighborhood Traffic Study

Staff is recommending that this study begin approximately at the same time as the trial of the Downtown North plan, although it could begin earlier if the Downtown North trial were delayed for some reason. However, staff does not believe that the Downtown North trial should be delayed for the sole purpose of completing the Lytton neighborhood study, as staff believes that the Downtown North plan will not materially affect the Lytton neighborhood. An alternative is to implement the Lytton study *only* if traffic volumes in the Lytton neighborhood increase by a defined “trigger” amount, such as 25 percent, due to the trial of

the Downtown North plan. This “trigger” alternative reacts only to possible impacts of the Downtown North plan, rather than taking the proactive approach to address existing problems, as favored by some Lytton neighborhood residents.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A draft environmental assessment including a mitigated negative declaration has been prepared for implementation of a trial of the Recommended Preferred Option (Attachment 9). Staff will gather traffic data at approximately 35 locations in the Downtown North and Lytton neighborhoods, including on the adjacent arterial streets, before the trial begins and at its conclusion. A survey of Downtown North property owners and residents will be conducted near the end of the trial. Staff will compile a record of incidents, crashes, complaints, and observations during the trial. All appropriate data will be used to update and finalize the environmental assessment. The assessment will be circulated for public review, and be approved by Council when/if Council approves the permanent installation.

PUBLIC NOTICE

A letter was mailed to all residents and property owners in Downtown North and the adjacent Lytton and Webster neighborhoods, informing them of the Commission meeting. The letter includes a drawing of the Recommended Preferred Option, and states that staff recommends approval of a six-month trial of the plan. Residents were instructed where to obtain a copy of this staff report, including the project web site.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will forward the Commission’s recommendations to the City Council for final approval by the end of this year. Assuming Council approval, implementation of the trial plan and commencement of the Lytton neighborhood study would occur once CIP funding is available in July 2001. Ideally, funding for permanent measures should also be assured by that time. The trial would last six months. Staff would return to the Commission and Council in early 2002 to present the results of the trial and, assuming a successful trial, to recommend approval to install permanent devices. If funding for the permanent installation is available, final design and installation of permanent devices would be completed by fall of 2002. This time schedule would be delayed if problems were encountered during the trial, in which case the trial would have to be extended.

ATTACHMENTS/EXHIBITS:

1. Neighborhood map
2. Excerpts from Final Technical Memorandum, October 9, 1999
3. August 16, 1999 letter to residents describing the four initial alternatives
4. Final three options

5. May 24, 2000 letter including description of Preferred Option
6. Arterial improvements
7. Middlefield/Everett intersection
8. Design of permanent traffic calming measures
9. Draft Environmental Assessment

COURTESY COPIES:

Project Advisory Committee Members
Lynne Johnson, Police Department

Prepared by: Carl Stoffel, Transportation Engineer

Reviewed by: Joseph Kott, Chief Transportation Official

Division Head Approval:

Joseph Kott, Chief Transportation Official