

TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL



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FROM: CITY MANAGER

**DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND
COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT**

DATE: NOVEMBER 22, 2004

CMR: 486:04

**SUBJECT: RECOMMENDED TRIAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
SELECTED TRAFFIC CALMING PLAN IN THE COLLEGE
TERRACE AREA**

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that City Council approve the following:

1. Adopt the project's Mitigated Negative Declaration (Attachment H of staff report to the Planning and Transportation Commission);
2. Direct staff to implement the physical traffic calming devices shown on Plan A (Attachment B of staff report to Commission) on a trial basis in the College Terrace area; and,
3. Evaluate and report on the effectiveness of Plan A within one year of completion of its construction.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project was initiated in response to a request signed by over 225 College Terrace residents who raised their concerns regarding cut-through traffic and excessive speeding. The request was submitted to the City Council on September 27, 1999. Development of the College Terrace Traffic Calming Plan was funded by the Stanford University General Use Permit (GUP). Design and implementation of the Plan will be fully funded by the mitigations fund of 2475 Hanover Street. The Planning and Transportation Commission requested that the subject condition of approval be stated in the staff report to Council. The approval condition states: "The applicant shall pay the City the sum of \$150,000.00 before commencement of new construction at 2475 Hanover Street to be used by the City to assist with traffic calming improvements in the College Terrace neighborhood." This condition of approval (No. 11.4) was adopted by City Council on February 19, 2002.

Following a comprehensive process of data collection, traffic analysis, identification of alternative traffic calming plans and community consultation, the devices shown on Plan A (Attachment B of staff report to the Commission) were selected and are now recommended for trial implementation. The selected Plan does not include any additional closures and employs less restrictive physical traffic calming devices namely traffic circles, speed tables and raised crosswalks as listed below:

- Stanford Avenue: From east to west along Stanford Avenue, Plan A recommends a speed table west of Wellesley Street and a raised crosswalk just west of Oberlin Street. The Plan also recommends speed tables west of Amherst Street and Dartmouth Street.
- College Avenue: Four traffic circles at the intersections of College Avenue with Yale Street, Oberlin Street, Hanover Street, and Columbia Street.
- Cambridge Avenue: A traffic circle at the intersection of Cambridge Avenue/Yale Street.
- California Avenue: A raised crosswalk at the west side of its intersection with Wellesley Street, and a speed table west of Princeton Street.

Detailed description of the College Terrace Traffic Calming Project, its background, performed analysis, developed alternative plans, and costs breakdown of selected alternative is provided in the staff report to Commission (Attachment B).

COMMISSION REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Planning and Transportation Commission reviewed and unanimously recommended the trial implementation of this project during the Commission's meeting held on October 13, 2004. Minutes of the Commission's meeting are provided under Attachment C.

Commission member Bonnie Packer requested that the staff report to Council note the following:

- Relevant section of the City's Comprehensive Plan that illustrates consistency with the project; and,
- Performance measures to be employed during the project's trial period that are described in the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) document.

The City of Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan encourages the application of traffic calming. Policy T-34 of the Comprehensive Plan states: "Implement traffic calming measures to slow traffic on local and collector residential streets and prioritize these measures over congestion management. Include traffic circles and other traffic calming devices among these measures."

The recommended one-year trial period will be utilized to monitor the project in terms of its effectiveness and level of community acceptance, as well as in terms of any potential

impacts and possible corrective measures. The MND developed for the trial implementation of this project (detailed in Attachment H of staff report to the Commission) covers performance measures controlling potential projects' impacts as summarized below:

- With regard to short-term impacts during project's construction, the MND identified mitigations covering truck movements to and from the neighborhood, construction hours, dust control and other construction specifications.
- Pursuant to the guidelines of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), the project should not cause deterioration in the operational level of service of the two signalized intersections of Stanford Avenue/Escondido Road and Stanford Avenue/Hanover Street during either of the AM or PM peak hours. Should any significant deterioration is detected, appropriate corrective actions will be taken that could include improvements in signal timing and phasing plans.
- In compliance with the City's Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program (NTCP), the plan should not cause significant traffic diversion impacts on neighboring streets. Significant traffic diversion is identified by a 25 percent increase in traffic volume on local and/or collector streets with "before" counts of less than 2500 vehicles per day (vpd), and more than 10 percent increase on local streets with a "before" count of 2500 vpd or greater. In the event that monitoring shows substantial traffic diversions, corrective actions will be taken that could be removing, relocating, or replacing one or more of the constructed devices.
- The traffic calming plan should not significantly impact response rates of emergency services. For example, travel times for Fire Department calls within and near the College Terrace neighborhood will not exceed the department's mission goals of 4 minutes for 90 percent of fire and basic medical responses, and 6 minutes for 90 percent of advanced medical responses (paramedics). Also, establishment of the recommended traffic calming devices should not increase the demand for police protection services nor substantially delay response times within the College Terrace neighborhood. The Police Department has a 3-minute response time goal for emergency calls. In the event that monitoring shows substantial increases in response travel times, the necessary changes will be applied that could include removal, relocation, or replacement of one or more of the traffic calming devices contained in the Plan.

Additional Crosswalks

The Planning and Transportation Commission also requested that staff investigate the feasibility of establishing additional pedestrian/school crosswalks across Stanford Avenue, particularly at Wellesley Street and Oberlin Street. It should be noted that the establishment of a pedestrian/school crosswalk at an uncontrolled location could give pedestrians a false sense of security. Transportation staff typically establishes a pedestrian/school crosswalk at

stop or signal controlled intersection approach. The establishment of a crosswalk could also be considered at a physical device (such as a refuge center median, or a speed table) constructed to increase motorists' awareness/visibility of pedestrians and improve crossing safety.

From site observations, Stanford Avenue is an east-west collector roadway bordering the north side of the College Terrace area. This collector street has two vehicular travel lanes and bike lanes. Curb-side parking is allowed only on the south side of the roadway. A pedestrian sidewalk is also provided on the south side only. Pedestrian crosswalks across Stanford Avenue are established on the easterly and westerly legs of the intersection of Stanford Avenue/Yale Street, which is controlled by an all-way stop control. Marked school crossings of Stanford Avenue are provided on the easterly leg of the intersection of Escondido Road/Stanford Avenue and westerly leg of Hanover Street/Stanford Avenue. Both of the intersections of Escondido Road/Stanford Avenue and Hanover Street/Stanford Avenue are signalized. School crosswalks are also painted across Stanford Avenue on the easterly and westerly legs of its intersection with Bowdoin Street, which is controlled by an all-way stop control. Each of the intersections of Stanford Avenue/Wellesley Street and Oberlin Street/Stanford Avenue is a four-legged intersection with stop signs only on the two minor approaches (i.e., only on Wellesley Street and Oberlin Street, respectively).

During staff's site evaluation, a considerable amount of pedestrian traffic to and from Escondido Elementary School was observed using the sidewalk on the south side of Stanford Avenue and crossing at the signalized intersections of Stanford Avenue with Escondido Road and Hanover Street was noted. Some pedestrians also choose to cross Stanford Avenue at Yale Street, then travel along the frontage road that runs parallel to Stanford Avenue within the Stanford campus. This frontage road has two travel lanes with available side shoulders used for 90 degree angle parking. There is a paved sidewalk provided along the north side of this frontage road.

The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) indicates that crosswalks should be marked at intersections where there is a substantial conflict between vehicular and pedestrian movements. The MUTCD criteria for establishing an all-way stop control and associated analysis are provided under Attachment A.

It has been concluded from the performed MUTCD analysis that the establishment of an all-way stop control is not presently warranted at either of the intersections of Stanford Avenue/Wellesley Street, or Oberlin Street/Stanford Avenue. Consequently, without the traffic calming plan, it is not recommended to paint pedestrian crosswalks across Stanford Avenue at these evaluated intersections. The requested crosswalks can only be considered if physical traffic calming devices are established at the intersections.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Criteria and Analysis of All-Way Stop Control Based on Provisions of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
- B. Staff Report to Commission, dated October 13, 2004 (including its attachments A–J).
- C. Additional correspondence received from Mr. William D. Ross dated October 13 and November 1, 2004 (Mr. Ross’s concerns are addressed in the report to Commission and other attached documents).
Minutes of October 13 Planning and Transportation Commission meeting

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CITY MANAGER APPROVAL: _____

EMILY HARRISON
Assistant City Manager

cc: Traffic Advisory Committee of the College Terrace Residents’ Association
Palo Alto Bicycle Advisory Committee
City/School Traffic Safety Committee