

Special Meeting
March 29, 2004

- 1. Conference with Labor Negotiator..... 295
- 2. Conference with Labor Negotiator..... 295
- 3. Conference with Labor Negotiator..... 295
- ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m. 295
- ORAL COMMUNICATIONS 296
- APPROVAL OF MINUTES 296
- 1. The Finance Committee recommends to the City Council to Consider Participation in a Lawsuit against the State of California to Invalidate the Preemption of One-Quarter Cent of Local Sales Tax as Part of the "Triple Flip". 296
- 2. Public Hearing: The City Council will consider the Planning and Transportation Commission recommendation to approve permanent implementation of the Modified Mixed Measures Plan as a replacement for the current Downtown North Traffic Calming Trial, which ended December 2003. 297
- 3. Colleagues Memo from Council Members Freeman and Kishimoto regarding Sidewalk Office Hours..... 304
- COUNCIL COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS 304
- ADJOURNMENT: The meeting ended at 9:12 p.m..... 304

The City Council of the City of Palo Alto met on this date in the Council Chambers at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Beecham, Burch, Cordell, Freeman, Kishimoto, Kleinberg, Morton, Mossar, Ojakian

CLOSED SESSION

1. Conference with Labor Negotiator
Agency Negotiator: City Manager and his designees pursuant to the Merit System Rules and Regulations (William Avery, Leslie Loomis)
Employee Organization: Local 715, Services Employees International Union (SEIU)
Authority: Government Code section 54957.6
2. Conference with Labor Negotiator
Agency Negotiator: City Manager and his designees pursuant to the Merit System Rules and Regulations (William Avery, Leslie Loomis)
Employee Organization: Local 1319, International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)
Authority: Government Code section 54957.6
3. Conference with Labor Negotiator
Agency Negotiator: City Manager and his designees pursuant to the Merit System Rules and Regulations (William Avery, Leslie Loomis)
Employee Organization: Palo Alto Fire Chiefs' Association
Authority: Government Code section 54957.6

The City Council met in Closed Session to discuss matters involving labor negotiations as described in Agenda Item Nos. 1, 2 and 3.

Mayor Beecham announced there was no reportable action.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

The City Council of the City of Palo Alto met on this date in the Council Chambers at 7:08 p.m.

PRESENT: Beecham, Burch, Cordell, Freeman, Kishimoto, Kleinberg, Morton, Mossar, Ojakian

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Victor Frost, P.O. Box 213, spoke regarding Silicon Valley jobs.

Seth Yatovitz, 207 High Street, spoke regarding community picnic announcement.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Council Member Mossar moved, seconded by Morton, to approve the minutes of March 1, 2004, as submitted.

MOTION PASSED 9-0.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION: Council Member Morton moved, seconded by Mossar, to approve Consent Calendar Item No. 1.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

1. The Finance Committee recommends to the City Council to Consider Participation in a Lawsuit against the State of California to Invalidate the Preemption of One-Quarter Cent of Local Sales Tax as Part of the "Triple Flip".

MOTION PASSED 9-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2. Public Hearing: The City Council will consider the Planning and Transportation Commission recommendation to approve permanent implementation of the Modified Mixed Measures Plan as a replacement for the current Downtown North Traffic Calming Trial, which ended

December 2003. The recommended plan includes five street closures, two traffic circles, one speed table, one bulb-out, and peak-hour turn restrictions from Middlefield Road and Alma Street onto Hawthorne Avenue. The Commission also recommends approval of a mitigated negative declaration with a set of possible future improvement actions.
(Item continued from 03/22/04 – Public Testimony is closed)

Mayor Beecham stated he would not participate in the item due to a conflict of interest because his residence was within the Downtown North Traffic Calming area. Vice Mayor Burch would officiate the meeting.

Interim City Attorney Wynne Furth would not participate in the item due to a conflict of interest because her residence was within the trial study area. Senior Assistant City Attorney Nellie Ancel would officiate as the City Attorney.

MOTION: Council Member Morton moved, seconded by Cordell, to limit Council questions to one hour.

MOTION PASSED 8-0, Beecham “not participating.”

Council Member Morton asked what the level of importance was of the barricades at the various locations and how they related to one another. He was particularly interested in the barricade at the intersection of Palo Alto Avenue and Middlefield Road.

Planning Engineer Carl Stoffel said that particular barricade was important due to the geometry of the turn. The remaining barricades operated as a system and one was as effective as another.

Chief Transportation Official Joseph Kott said the traffic was heavier on Everett and Hawthorne Avenues than on Palo Alto Avenue. The Everett and Hawthorne Avenue closures ranked higher than the one on Palo Alto Avenue. Of the five street closures, the Hawthorne Avenue ranked the highest.

Council Member Morton asked that the terms traffic calming, traffic elimination, and traffic diversion be defined and asked how barricades, roundabouts, and closures applied to the traffic calming measures.

Mr. Stoffel said the purpose of the project was to reduce through traffic and staff had focused heavily on street closures. Roundabouts and tables kept streets open, whereas, street closures were more effective in reducing through traffic.

Council Member Morton felt the roundabout on Hawthorne Avenue, which was placed two short blocks from a barricade and the same in reverse traffic on Everett Avenue, was overkill. He questioned why both were placed in a one-block area.

Mr. Stoffel said it was the Mixed Measures Plan. Removing some of the closures and placing milder measures, as substitutes for closures, tamed the existing plan and maintained the goal of reducing through traffic. He gave an overview of a matrix comparing the parameters for the Traffic Calming Plan. It included the current Trial Plan, Mixed Measures Plan, Modified Mixed Measures Plan, and No Closure Plan.

Council Member Freeman referred to the matrix and asked what "Diversion on internal street exceeding 25 percent increase" and "not expected to exceed 25 percent increase," meant.

Mr. Stoffel said for the current trial plan, traffic increase was measured on several street blocks that exceeded the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) threshold for the traffic increase on local streets. On the other plans, the projection was not expected to see the increases, but there were change increases in the recommended improvement measures and monitoring plan.

Council Member Freeman asked staff to explain what "No significant impact on emergency response times" meant under the category of "Impact on Fire Department Access."

Deputy Fire Chief Deby Pryor said there were no increases in the average response time. During the trial period, response time for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) was 4 minutes, 28 seconds and for other fire dispatch calls was 5 minutes, 15 seconds. During the same four-month period in 2002, the EMS response time was 4 minutes, 30 seconds, and other fire calls were 5 minutes, 26 seconds.

Council Member Freeman asked what the percentage reduction would be if "no-turn" signs were placed in the Downtown North area.

Mr. Stoffel said the turn restriction signs during weekday peak hours accounted for approximately 10 percent of traffic reductions.

Council Member Freeman said with signs and speed bumps and no traffic circles, there would be approximately a 20 percent reduction.

Mr. Stoffel said it was similar to the No Closure Plan that included turn restrictions, three circles, and one table.

Council Member Freeman asked if traffic circles fell into a category of diversion equal to speed tables or did one have a higher degree of diversion than the other.

Mr. Stoffel said they both caused the same type of delay. Most important would be the number of devices.

Council Member Freeman asked how many diversions were on Willow Road.

Mr. Stoffel said there were two or three, perhaps four.

Council Member Kishimoto asked whether the difference in the Level of Service (LOS) ranging from C to D at Lytton Avenue and Middlefield Road resulted from turn restrictions.

Mr. Stoffel said during the peak hours, the LOS D for all three plans were due to turn restrictions causing all traffic to go through the intersection.

Council Member Kishimoto asked how Everett Avenue and Middlefield Road would fit into the Bike Master Plan and how the Bike Boulevard at Everett Avenue crossed Middlefield Road.

Mr. Kott said the Everett Avenue Bicycle Boulevard would connect with the proposed Guinda Street Bicycle Boulevard to provide an east-west, north-south connection. It would connect with additional east-west Bicycle Boulevards at Homer and Melville Avenues. Bryant Street was the existing Bicycle Boulevard in the Downtown North area. Everett Avenue would create an east-west connection to the existing north-south bicycle boulevard and connect to additional north-south bicycle boulevard connections.

Council Member Kishimoto asked since bicyclists would be crossing Everett Avenue and Middlefield Road, which was a busy street. Did staff envision a bicycle-pedestrian activated light similar to the one at Bryant Street and Embarcadero Road.

Mr. Kott said staff would need to evaluate the effectiveness and feasibility of a "bicycle only" signal at Everett Avenue and Middlefield Road.

Council Member Kishimoto asked if Middlefield Road potentially would have a bicycle lane.

Mr. Kott said there were other issues on Middlefield Road with regard to parking and cross-section space, but a north-south bicycle lane would be more expeditious than a bicycle boulevard.

Council Member Ojakian said the chart indicated a 10,000-trip reduction in Downtown North and asked where those cars were diverted.

Mr. Kott said it was presumed some trips were diverted to Menlo Park and lead to Highway 101 and the Dumbarton Bridge. Others filtered to south of the Downtown area, but very little into University and Lytton Avenues.

Council Member Ojakian asked whether diversion was measured outside of the Downtown North area.

Mr. Kott said it was anticipated there would be a wide dispersal and no outer areas were measured except for Lytton Avenue.

Council Member Morton requested an explanation to support the fact that 500 cars per day were going through the area with implemented measures and an increase to 4,400 per day with no closures.

Mr. Stoffel said an origin-destination study was completed for the Current Trial Plan. The results were 500 cars per day going through the area and 4,400 trips with no closures.

Council Member Ojakian said in 1999-2000, data showed there was a heavy traffic issue at Emerson Street and Everett Avenue. He asked what effect would the current plan have in that area with the addition of a traffic circle.

Planning Commissioner Phyllis Cassel said through traffic coming from Middlefield Road would go down Lytton Avenue.

Council Member Ojakian said the data indicated cars turning off at Alma Street turned on to Emerson Street. Emerson Street between Hawthorn and Everett Avenues had the highest amount of traffic cutting through the area.

Ms. Cassel said it was recommended that the closure be removed from the corner of High Street and Everett Avenue because it was causing severe problems for the businesses in the area. The traffic circle would slow the traffic down at that intersection.

Council Member Mossar asked if there was a standard guideline used for cut-

through traffic in residential areas.

Mr. Stoffel said it was about 10 to 20 percent level and 60 percent was an unacceptable level.

Mr. Kott said one of the requirements for street closures was to satisfy a problem with overwhelming through-trips. To quantify a quality specified in the Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan), a threshold was used for staff work as a clear majority of the trips. It had no origin or destination trips in the neighborhood placing it at 60 percent.

Council Member Cordell said she was not in support of the plan but would consider the No Closure Plan with a modification of retaining two closures on Palo Alto Avenue for two reasons: 1) It was the sight of dedicated park land and walkability and used by bicyclists; and 2) The discord of the Downtown North community focused primarily upon closures on Everett and Hawthorn Avenues.

Council Member Kishimoto preferred the original Mixed Measures Plan, removal of the turn restriction at Everett Avenue and Alma Street, and retention of two closures on Palo Alto Avenue. She asked staff to return with an evaluation of the Everett Avenue Bicycle Boulevard.

MOTION: Council Member Morton moved, seconded by Cordell, to support the No Closure Plan on a one-year trial period with a restriction that the closure at Middlefield Road and the eastern end of Palo Alto Avenue remain, and to place one speed bump on the western end of Palo Alto Avenue.

Council Member Mossar did not support the motion. She favored having the plan on a trial basis and having technical staff and the Planning and Transportation Commission state what the Trial Plan should be.

Council Member Ojakian asked whether the No Closure Plan would work with minor modifications on Palo Alto Avenue.

Mr. Kott said the plan would minimize some of through-traffic and make the street safer.

Council Member Ojakian supported trying the No Closure Plan on a trial basis. He emphasized safety and felt traffic calming was the right thing to do. Street closures meant dispersing traffic elsewhere and he was only in favor of them under extreme circumstances. He supported the motion.

Council Member Freeman supported the motion based on safety and on Comp Plan goals. She suggested when facing traffic calming issues in the future, to move forward in increments rather than stepping back once a project was started.

Council Member Kleinberg declared the first trial plan closed and asked staff to monitor a different trial plan with less restrictive strategies more in line with the Comp Plan.

Vice Mayor Burch supported the motion and asked Council Member Morton to consider amending the motion by adding traffic circles at Hawthorne and Everett Avenues at a location to be determined.

Council Member Morton preferred not to change the motion. He said if staff felt strongly about the modification, it could be placed on a Consent Calendar and acted on in the future.

Director of Planning and Community Development Steve Emslie said an analysis would be prepared for Council's consideration for the added speed circles and recommended a one-year trial period begin from the date of implementation.

Council Member Morton said it was acceptable.

Council Member Kleinberg wanted to know what was being done about the traffic flow on Middlefield Road and Lytton Avenue and how soon would it happen.

Council Member Cordell needed clarification on the additional circles and asked if it would come back to Council as an informational item only.

Vice Mayor Burch explained if additional circles were proposed, it would need to come back for Council approval.

Mr. Emslie said staff would inform Council about the traffic results of the new plan with an analysis of the additional traffic circles.

Vice Mayor Burch clarified any additions above and beyond what was proposed would need to return to Council for approval.

Mr. Emslie said that was correct.

Council Member Freeman requested that Council be informed on how the

success of the new trial plan was measured.

Vice Mayor Burch asked, assuming the motion was passed, would the barrier next to Stanford Electric be removed as soon as possible.

Mr. Emslie said yes and understood it was part of the motion.

MOTION PASSED 6-2, Kishimoto, Mossar no, Beecham “not participating.”

Ms. Ancel added there was a resolution before Council to approve the Modified Mixed Plan and to adopt the Mitigate Negative Declaration. Staff needed to make revisions to reflect the plan that was adopted and rename it as the “Revised No Closure Plan.” Because of the CEQA findings, a motion was required to adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration in the findings of the Resolution.

MOTION: Council Member Morton moved, seconded by Cordell to adopt a Resolution to approve a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Modified No Closure Plan.

Resolution 8415 entitled “Resolution of the Council of the City of Palo Alto Adopting a Mitigated Negative Declaration Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act for and Approving the Permanent Implementation of the Modified Mixed Measures Traffic Calming Plan for the Downtown North Neighborhood.”

Council Member Kleinberg asked why a Mitigated Negative Declaration was being adopted when this was a trial.

Ms. Ancel said because CEQA came into the approved plan.

Outside Counsel Roger Beers added it was an action that had some impact.

Council Member Kleinberg said an action was not taken when the trial was adopted nine months prior.

Mr. Beers advised to base the decision on the Negative Declaration because one had been prepared and the process had gone through. He felt since Council was going to take action that had conceivable impact, it would be better to have a CEQA document as support.

MOTION PASSED 6-1, Kishimoto no, Beecham “not participating”, Mossar absent.

COUNCIL MATTERS

3. Colleagues Memo from Council Members Freeman and Kishimoto regarding Sidewalk Office Hours

No action required.

COUNCIL COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Council Member Freeman noted the proposal in the Colleague's Memo for sidewalk office hours was to have a venue to speak with the public. As the dates for office hours approached, the time would be mentioned in Council comments.

Vice Mayor Burch mentioned the Mayor had received a letter from Congresswoman Anna Eshoo stating the work on the transportation authorization bill, H.R. 3550, was finished, and she was successful in securing funding for the City of Palo Alto in the Intelligent Transportation System Project with an earmark of \$500,000.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting ended at 9:12 p.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

City Clerk

Mayor

NOTE: Sense minutes (synopsis) are prepared in accordance with Palo Alto Municipal Code Sections 2.04.180(a) and (b). The City Council and Standing Committee meeting tapes are made solely for the purpose of facilitating the preparation of the minutes of the meetings. City Council and Standing Committee meeting tapes are recycled 90 days from the date of the meeting. The tapes are available for members of the public to listen to during regular office hours.