TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

DATE: APRIL 25, 2005

CMR: 230:05

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDED PERMANENT RETENTION OF THE TRAFFIC CALMING DEVICES ON CHANNING AVENUE BETWEEN GUINDA STREET AND GREER ROAD

RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that City Council approve the following:

1. Adopt the project’s Mitigated Negative Declaration (Attachment E of staff report to the Planning and Transportation Commission);
2. Direct staff to retain on a permanent basis the physical traffic calming devices on Channing Avenue between Guinda Street and Greer Road as shown on the attached Plan (Attachment A of staff report to City Council), given that the two speed tables will be reconstructed at a lower profile with 3 inches maximum height;
3. Direct staff to evaluate the feasibility of establishing physical traffic calming devices on Channing Avenue between Greer Road and Wildwood Lane subject to additional consultation with abutting residents; and,
4. Direct staff to evaluate the feasibility of installing an in-pavement lighted crosswalk at the school crossing provided across Channing Avenue at Heather Lane.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Channing Avenue is a residential collector, which mostly contains single-family housing. Other abutting land uses include the Saint Elizabeth Seton School, Duveneck Elementary School, and Eleanor Pardee Park. In response to community concerns with regard to safety conditions and excessive vehicular traffic speeds, City Council directed staff on June 29, 1999 to install traffic calming devices on Channing Avenue near Lincoln Avenue. City Council also directed staff to study the section of Channing Avenue located east of Guinda Street for possible establishment of traffic calming devices.
In February 2003, after achieving approval of affected residents, a speed table was constructed on Channing Avenue near Lincoln Avenue and an electronic speed advisory sign was installed near Addison Avenue. On March 6, 2003, the St. Francis/Duveneck and Crescent Park Neighborhood Associations sponsored a community meeting attended by area residents, as well as by representatives of Saint Elizabeth Seton School, Duveneck Elementary School, and City staff from the Police and Planning & Community Environment Departments. An overwhelming 93 percent of community members voted to move forward with a traffic calming plan for Channing Avenue between Guinda Street and West Bayshore Road. Subsequent community meetings were held on April 1 and 22, and June 5, 2003. During the April 22 meeting, Transportation staff presented four traffic calming plans ranging from minimum to maximum speed reduction. The participating residents selected a “minimum” plan to avoid saturating the street with too many traffic calming devices. Area residents also provided their input through the neighborhood on-line discussion board, e-mails, and the resident opinion surveys circulated by the City. The selected traffic calming plan was submitted to the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) for trial implementation. It should be noted that the segment of Channing Avenue located between Greer and West Bayshore Roads was removed from the project area for possible consideration at a later date. This is mainly due to the lack of consensus among affected residents with regard to the deployment of traffic calming.

On July 9, 2003, the Planning and Transportation Commission discussed and recommended approval of a trial traffic calming plan for the section of Channing Avenue between Guinda Street and Greer Road. The Director of Planning and Community Environment approved the trial in August 2003, and the traffic calming devices were constructed in April 2004. These implemented devices are listed below and illustrated on segments 1 through 4 of the map enclosed under Attachment A.

**Trial Traffic Calming Devices:**
- Channing Avenue at Addison Avenue – center medians/pedestrian refuge islands at existing crosswalk
- Channing Avenue at Harriet Street – raised crosswalk at existing school crossing
- Property line between numbers 1310 and 1320 Channing Avenue – speed table
- Channing Avenue at Heather Lane – center medians/pedestrian refuge islands at existing school crossing
- Adjacent to number 1776 Channing Avenue – center median/slow point
- Adjacent to number 1844 Channing Avenue – center median/slow point

In addition, the traffic calming plan initially included a speed table adjacent to numbers 1585/1586 Channing Avenue. This speed table was removed in response to a request made by adjacent households. Nearby residents between Newell Road and Stanley Way met with City Transportation staff to discuss replacement of the speed table, and a consensus was
reached to instead install a center median on Channing Avenue to the east of Desoto Drive.

Detailed description of the Channing Avenue Traffic Calming Project, its background, performed analysis, community consultation process and received comments is provided in the staff report to Commission (Attachment B).

COMMISSION REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS
With the exception of two absent Commission members, the Planning and Transportation Commission unanimously recommended the permanent retention of the Channing Avenue Traffic Calming Plan during the Commission’s meeting held on November 17, 2004. Minutes of the Commission’s meeting are provided under Attachment C.

Commission member Burt requested that, in future projects, staff collect and report on speeders (who travel at speeds higher than the 85th percentile speed), along with the potential reduction in speeds and improvement in safety conditions as a result of implementing a traffic calming project.

A number of residents who attended the Commission meeting reported their support to the overall traffic calming plan, but requested that the two speed tables be lowered to avoid potential damage to vehicles, noise impacts, etc. Accordingly, should the traffic calming plan be retained on a permanent basis, City staff will proceed to reconstruct the speed tables at a profile that is only 3 inches high. Signing and markings of the reconstructed speed tables will follow standards of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices including provision of the Supplemental Advisory Speed Plaques.

In addition, a few area residents raised concerns with regard to the general aesthetics due to the lack of any landscaping or hardscaping of the center medians. Without contacting the City, area residents planted some flowers in the medians. City staff is concerned about the level of maintenance required and the liability issues associated with residents standing in the middle of the street to water the planted flowers. Following the Commission meeting, Planning staff reviewed and is prepared to proceed with replacing the planted flowers with very low maintenance Carpet Rose, or Lantana. Public Works staff was also contacted and agreed to water the center medians once to twice a month during their regular watering of the side trees.

An area resident also requested during the Commission meeting that City staff re-evaluate the possibility of establishing physical traffic calming devices on Channing Avenue to the east of Greer Road. Following to the Commission meeting, another area resident contacted Transportation staff and requested that an in pavement lighted crosswalk be added to the school crossing provided across Channing Avenue at Heather Lane. Based on Council directive, Transportation staff will proceed to evaluate these requested additions to the traffic calming plan.
ATTACHMENTS
A. Plan showing the overall traffic calming devices on Channing Avenue between Guinda Street and Greer Road.
B. Staff Report to Commission, dated November 17, 2004 (including its attachments A – E).
C. Minutes of November 17 Planning and Transportation Commission meeting.

PREPARED BY: ____________________________
HEBA EL-GUENDY
Transportation Engineer

DEPARTMENT HEAD: ________________________
STEVE EMSLIE
Director of Planning and Community Environment

CITY MANAGER APPROVAL: __________________
EMILY HARRISON
Assistant City Manager

cc: Channing Avenue project working group members
    Palo Alto Bicycle Advisory Committee
    Saint Elizabeth Seton School
    Duveneck Elementary School