Wednesday, December 10, 2003
REGULAR MEETING – 7:00 PM
City Council Chambers
Civic Center, 1st Floor
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, California 94301

ROLL CALL: 7:00 PM

Commissioners:  
Michael Griffin, Chair  
Phyllis Cassel, Vice-Chair  
Annette Bialson – absent  
Patrick Burt  
Bonnie Packer  
Karen Holman  

Staff:  
Steve Emslie, Planning Director  
Joe Kott, Chief Transportation Official  
Gayle Likens, Transportation Planner  
Dan Sodegren, Special Counsel to City Attorneys  
Terry Bottomley, Consultant  
Olubayo Elimisha, Staff Secretary

AGENDIZED ITEM:

1. Review and Recommendation to Council on a Proposed Charleston/Arastradero Corridor Plan of Improvements from Fabian to Miranda.

Chair Griffin: Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the Wednesday, December 10 meeting of the Planning and Transportation Commission. It is a regular meeting of the Commission and would the Secretary please call the roll?

We now come to the Oral Communications part of our agenda.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS. Members of the public may speak to any item not on the agenda with a limitation of three (3) minutes per speaker. Those who desire to speak must complete a speaker request card available from the secretary of the Commission. The Planning and Transportation Commission reserves the right to limit the oral communications period to 15 minutes.

Chair Griffin: Do we have any speaker request cards for Oral Communications? No, that being the case we will move on to New Business.
CONSENT CALENDAR. Items will be voted on in one motion unless removed from the calendar by a Commission Member.

AGENDA CHANGES, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS. The agenda may have additional items added to it up until 72 hours prior to meeting time.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

Public Hearings: None.

Other Items: None.

Chair Griffin: I will open the public hearing on item number one, which is a Commission review and recommendation to the Council on a Proposed Charleston/Arastradero Corridor Plan of Improvements from Fabian to Miranda. Will the Staff please make some introductory remarks? Steve.

NEW BUSINESS.

Public Hearings:

1. Review and Recommendation to Council on a Proposed Charleston/Arastradero Corridor Plan of Improvements from Fabian to Miranda.

Mr. Steve Emслиe, Planning Director: Thank you Chair Griffin and members of the Commission. My name is Steve Emслиe, Director of Planning and Community Environment for the City of Palo Alto. I would like to make a brief introductory set of comments and introduce the team that has been working on the plan that you have before you.

Just in the way of background as the Commission is well aware this study was initiated by the City Council’s adoption of a Development Moratorium for the Charleston/Arastradero Corridor back in April of this year. Since that time Staff and our consultants have been working to develop a set of recommendations to present to you as a draft plan that you would then forward to the City Council for their review. Leading up to that event the Staff held a series of community workshops, four workshops, two were held last summer as an introduction to get feedback and comment from the community. Staff had prepared a set of alternatives, which were reviewed at two subsequent public workshops this fall. In addition Staff has been working with a group of stakeholders on an every other week basis for feedback and comment and for exchange of information.

We have a brief presentation tonight from Joe Kott and our Urban Design Consultant, Terry Bottomley. We are not intending on covering a lot of the background since we did review that with the Commission and the City Council a couple of weeks ago. We wanted to spend a little bit more time on the rationale of some of the recommendations, some of the safety improvements and then of course entertain specific questions. I did also want to emphasis that we are on a very tight timeframe. When we took on this assignment back in April we made it very clear that this is a very short timeframe to do a plan of this magnitude, really nine months is just-in-time planning. So as such we are encouraging the Commission to be as efficient as possible in its review clearly not to sacrifice any of the quality or the information that you need but we do have a deadline of presenting this to the City Council on January 20 as the Development Moratorium
is set to expire on the 31st and we certainly want to have the plan in place before that happens.
There is no provision in the Moratorium for any extensions and we are taking this deadline
incredibly seriously. So we did want to emphasize the need to move through this as quickly as
possible.

As you listen to the presentation tonight I just wanted to leave you with a couple of key messages
as you digest the information that you are about to be presented. One is that the primary
motivation for moving on the study was the safety concerns. As the Commission is well aware
the Charleston/Arastradero Corridor serves the majority of the City’s school age population.
Many of our children and parents traverse this corridor on a regular basis and a big factor in
promoting mobility through the corridor really depends on promoting safe alternative forms of
transportation, bicycle, pedestrian and public transportation is paramount in achieving our
objectives.

A second major objective is that Staff has taken very seriously and believes that we can achieve
the mobility concerns of the community for the passenger vehicle as well. That traversing the
corridor should continue to be as smooth and efficient as possible. With the corridor as it is
currently designed with decades old traffic engineering went into the design of this corridor and
we know quite a bit more about capacity and traffic behavior than in the 1950s when this
roadway was designed to the current day standards. It is very possible to through technology and
through current transportation practices to promote the efficient travel time through the corridor.

That is what we feel is important to smooth out the travel time to make the signal operations
work as efficiently as possible so that the experience of the moving through the corridor is as
trouble-free and efficient as possible. That means that the average speed could be reduced
because we do know that there are segments of this corridor that the average speed is
unacceptably high and that through better signal timing and through efficient intersection
improvements have the motorist stop as little as possible moving through the corridor so that the
average travel time is actually improved or kept at the current levels. So those are some of the
goals that we had going into this.

One of the major components of the recommendation is that several segments of the plan are
recommended to be reduced to a three-lane segment, two travel lanes and a center left turn lane.
As you review the information keep in mind that a four lane section provides primarily extra
pavement in the two center lanes for the left turn movement, that you can promote better traffic
efficiency by channelizing the traffic, providing the kinds of refuges in the center turn lane that
reduces the backup and the need for driver frustration and backlog caused by left turners
blocking a travel lane. The benefit of that is not only a more efficient and smooth traffic
movement through the corridor but also much improved pedestrian and bicycle safety especially
when crossing the street. The phenomenon of the four-lane cross section greatly contributes to
unsatisfactory pedestrian conditions. By just simply reducing the number of travel lanes that the
pedestrian must pay attention to as they cross the roadway and it also provides an opportunity for
center pedestrian refuges, a place where a pedestrian can be out of the line of traffic in the center
median that can also greatly enhance traffic safety. So those are the messages we would like you
to consider as you hear the presentation.

I would like to now introduce Joe Kott our Chief Transportation Official who is going to be
giving you his view of the project. Then after that we will hear from Terry Bottomley our
Design Consultant. I would also like to let you know we have several Staff members available
who have been working on the project for the duration. We have Gayle Likens our
Transportation Planner who is sitting at the Staff table and we have Dan Sodegren our Deputy
Senior City Attorney from the Attorney’s Office also able to answer legal questions. In the
audience we have John Lusardi who is our Special Planning Projects Manager and Susan Ondik
whose team burned the midnight oil over the weekend in completing the Negative Declaration,
which you have in front of you. They are here to answer any questions regarding that document.
So now I am going to turn it over to Joe and the rest of the presentation.

Mr. Joe Kott, Chief Transportation Official: Thank you very much Steve and good evening
Commissioners. Actually Steve gave my presentation so if there are any questions I would be
pleased to answer them.

In all seriousness before my presentation I would like to give the Commission a couple of edits
on our recommendations. I should note that the good Dominican Sisters taught me how to read
years and years ago. The Christian Brothers, those fine vintners and enjoyers of fine wine,
taught me how to proofread and I think the former lesson was better than the latter lesson. To
begin with we are asking this Commission to recommend to Council. So this Commission’s role
as we all know is to recommend to Council. The Commission recommends and the Council
disposes of recommendations. Recommendation number 14 a very important edit. By the way,
these will be corrected on the internet not only on the Commission’s Agendas and Reports site
but also on the Charleston Road Corridor website. Recommendation 14 please do note that in
the third line, which reads, “median islands from Fabian to El Camino Real,” that should be
corrected to read, “from Fabian to Alma.” The sentence above that should have been better
written but was not and reads now, “each direction) and one,” please eliminate the ‘one,’
“interrumtigit left turning lane” please add an ‘s’ to the ‘lane’ to make it plural. Recommendation
14 line two the fourth word is ‘one’ please just eliminate that word and add later on in that line
an ‘s’ to the word ‘lane’ to make it plural. I should have really said clearly that we are
recommending more than one left turning lane. Finally, Recommendation 17 please add to the
very end of the recommendation after, “in and out of Louis and widen pedestrian refuge.” It is as
important an objective as safer left turning movements for vehicles. I really do need to take
responsibility for that myself and not blame the fine Christian Brothers who otherwise gave me a
very good education.

Chair Griffin: You are not supposed to do your own proofing.

Mr. Kott: That is true enough. This Commission and the public are well aware of conditions on
Charleston and Arastradero Roads. These are fairly representative but probably a little bit busier
times of day than ordinarily but present some of the obstacles driver and pedestrians and cyclists
encounter on a daily basis. As Steve indicated we have been mandated by Council, the date was
April 14, to prepare this corridor plan. In doing so we had to consider not only current
conditions but cumulative future traffic conditions. We have used in this plan our new citywide
computer traffic model for the future conditions projections. It is certainly a transportation
focus, we have to make that clear, it is not a land use plan. We take land use as given or as
assumed. Council, for example, did assume two land use programs that we put into our
computer forecast model. We are interested in this project the whole public right-of-way, not
just the circulation parts of the right-of-way, therefore, the visual amenity, the streetscape and so
forth, street trees and landscaped medians and whatnot. We are supposed to recommend to
Council a plan of improvements that cover these topics by the end of January of 2004. The plan
is an improvement plan by segment. It is a diverse roadway, as you all know. There are
different types of land uses on it, somewhat different traffic mix, although traffic volumes don’t
vary a lot on an average daily basis. It is definitely characterized by school traffic flows. Key
objectives as Steve has enunciated are to improve walking and cycling conditions. This is very
important. It is not only to address current safety concerns but also to induce more people to
walk and bike. For a long time traffic engineers have been justly criticized for being unwilling to
for example recommend a new crosswalk because there aren’t many people crossing at that
location. We are justly chastised because when it is pointed out to us that they are not crossing
because it is often not safe to cross. So we would really like to induce more walking and biking
for a whole host of reasons. Enhanced streetscape and amenity. More efficient traffic flow but
less speeding. A very interesting, a very important point to grasp. We don’t want to delay
anybody. One of the constraints put on us by Council is do not delay average vehicle trip times
on this corridor. So we have to somehow make our intersections work better and at the same
time slow speeds and speeding generally occurs in between major intersections. Of course
enhance the quality of life on the corridor.

There is a big emphasis in this plan on more efficient traffic signal operations. That is, a greater
throughput and less delay, shorter queues, at our signalized intersections. We will talk a little bit
later about automating our traffic signal system on this corridor as a way to do that. We can
reallocate green time in real time for optimal efficiency.

The plan provides opportunities to widen and make continuous corridor bicycle lanes. In general
the wider the bike lane, the safer and more comfortable biking. The constraint on width of
course is if you make the bike lanes too wide vehicle drivers think they are through lanes. That
said there are opportunities to widen bike lanes and make cycling a safer experience and induce
more people to cycle as a result. Likewise we have opportunities for new left turn lanes to
improve traffic flow. One of the stunning results in the research around the county and one of
these papers is up on the Internet and I do recommend everyone take a look at it is the value of
left turn lanes and pockets. A lot of people in town like to read this stuff, I certainly do. The
paper is entitled, “Conversion of Four Lane Undivided Roadways to Three Lane Facilities is
done by Thomas Welch of the Iowa DOT’s Chief of the Office of Transportation Safety there.
Around the country when there has been conversion of four lane roadways to three lanes there
has been really no loss in traffic volume. It seems to be a very interesting result. In general,
conversion has sharply reduced crash rates. The center left turn lane is one reason why that
happens because it really moves the obstructing vehicle on a four-lane roadway wishing to make
a right turn out of the travel flow, tucks that vehicle away so that you don’t have this spillback
effect, the spillback effect of people having to stop to wait for them to make the turn. Often they
get frustrated and try to jockey over to the adjoining lane to the right interrupting that flow of
traffic.

The plan also provides for spot safety and efficiency improvements at selected locations.
Commissioners may know we did conduct what we called a mobile workshop and had a lot of
fun doing it actually with residents yesterday looking at these particular sites. I’ll talk about the
approach here. We need to consider future travel demand since there is no good at all designing
or redesigning a roadway without considering what the future might bring for demand for space
on the roadway. Council did adopt formal Corridor Plan performance measures. There are a
total of ten and they include travel time and delay, that it is not to increase those. Increase
cycling and walking and transit use. Decrease crashes and related objectives. As Steve said, we
have had considerable public input within the constraints of time we’ve had. This is really a
forced march operation particularly in Palo Alto, which is a town that does like to be engaged
over time in these kinds of processes. We did make some outreach to some stakeholder groups,
including PTA Traffic Safety Reps, and our Bicycle Advisory Committee. We have had an
informal input group of stakeholders that includes business people, developers, neighborhood
association representatives, bicycle committee representatives and others. I mentioned the
mobile workshop and we do have a corridor plan website and that is the web address for anyone
interested in taking a look at it. It has quite a bit of information on it, all of our traffic analysis,
all of our traffic forecasts, related studies on this topic of four to three conversions and a lot of
other things, meeting notes from our public forums and Staff Reports. We are adding to it all the
time.

Again in terms of approach and I think this is very interesting, we are creating what I call a
“smart corridor” here. We are trying to get out of this box of a really kind of dumb stalemate
and the arguments between folks who want more highway physical capacity, more lanes, and
those who want what are called “skinny streets” or “road diets”. For the latter category, the
advocates are called New Urbanists. The former category in the old days was called the
“Highway Boys”. I don’t know what they are called now. It is a very stale debate. It has been
going on for a long time. It has been getting rather intense and there is no real need for it
because we can have both. We can more efficient operations on our streets, we can have better
throughput and better flow for motor vehicles and we can have more person trip capacity. In
other words, not just occupants in private motor vehicles, but people on bicycles, people on foot,
and people in public transport. It is really a different kind of paradigm. It is not very exciting
because it doesn’t involve a lot of struggle and strife and so forth because it really gives
everyone what they most want, I think. Also interesting in context of discussion in town and so
forth in opinion columns in newspapers and whatnot is that as we stand now with our proposal
about one half of this corridor will remain two travel lanes in each direction. The changes are
not quite as dramatic as they have been portrayed. Nevertheless with a new set of left turn lanes
and automated traffic signal systems through traffic adaptive signal technology, some spot
improvements including a new dedicated right turn at Gunn High School, we expect actually to
reduce travel time and reduce delay through this corridor plan and open up a lot of opportunity
for cycling and walking and more transit use.

Our approach holds vehicle travel harmless, in fact it marginally increases the efficiency of
vehicle travel by reducing the delay fractionally. About one to three minutes is our projection of
reduced delay for a trip along the entire corridor in a motor vehicle. At the same time it also
creates much safer biking and walking conditions. We expect that the cyclists and the walkers
will appear like the swallows at Capistrano. There have been some arguments in town that you
don’t see many pedestrians or cyclists and so forth on this corridor. Well, you know what? The
corridor is not all that safe. I biked it the other day for the mobile workshop from one end to the
other. I have done that before. It is just not real safe especially at the major intersections and we
do address those problems in the corridor plan. Make it safer and they will come. There are a lot
of reasons to cycle and walk in Palo Alto. We have a lot of cycling and walking in other parts of
town. There is no reason on a major school corridor that we can’t have the same here.

So we are talking about smart capacity and getting out of this really stale dead-end debate over
do we need more lanes or fewer lanes. We are really vectoring off into a much smarter quadrant.
At the same time we are making room for bicycling and walking.

City of Palo Alto
A little bit about safety. What do pedestrians need? They need to have their cognitive tests simplified. They need less exposure to through traffic. They need slower through traffic approach speeds. They need a chance if possible for a median refuge not only to collect their breath, but also to greatly simplify the task of walking. Imagine this as you cross an intersection, four lane roadway, fairly high approach speeds, like on these two streets (35 to 40 miles an hour design speed, 85th percentile speeds), pedestrians must be aware as they cross that first travel lane in the oncoming direction as they look left of traffic that there is traffic on the other side too, because they will soon cross the center line and have to meet that traffic. So by the time you are into the second lane in the first stage of your pedestrian journey you are already mindful and half watchful of traffic on the other side. With the center median refuge the only cognitive task you have is to look one direction, wait for a safe gap, cross over, reach the median, and then change your focus. If you have a three lane cross section it means you have got one through lane in each direction to worry about. It reduces your through lane crossing time and through lane crossing distance by half.

Bicycle lanes are critical matters for cycling safety and I am glad to say we have done a lot of work in Palo Alto on bicycle facilities and we know a lot in this town about them. Bicyclists need space, they need width and they also need recognition or visibility. There needs to be an understanding, a recognition that there is a bike facility on the street. We have a proposal in our corridor plan to make the bike lanes highly visible and also widen them and make them continuous. They are not continuous on this corridor, which creates a potential safety problem. Now a lot of people avoid walking and biking on the corridor, therefore, we have an artificially low rate of crashes, if you will, for bikes and pedestrians. I think if more people hazarded these bike and walk trips on the corridor as it is now we would have higher crash rates. One of the people that joined us in the mobile workshop biked on the sidewalk the whole way. Not just on the section between Fabian and Middlefield but the whole way and that spoke volumes to me about how people perceive this corridor for biking. Again, the cyclists and walkers, once we make it safer, they will appear.

Just a little bit about why we worry about vehicle speeds. Well, at 40 miles and hour if you are hit by a car you have an 85% chance of being killed. It is only five percent at 20 miles an hour. A driver at 40 miles an hour sees the pedestrian 100 feet ahead and hits the pedestrian at 38 miles an hour. You can see what the odds of the pedestrian are from the line above. Driving at 25 miles an hour a driver will stop before hitting the pedestrian. So it is a very critical time gap between 25 and 40 miles per hour. That is why we are worried about prevailing speeds that are too close to 40 as they are on this corridor.

Another good principle to think about is when we have a three-lane section, one through in each direction; the prudent driver sets the pace. The speeder, the rash driver, just has to be prudent him or herself because the person ahead will set the pace.

We have a phasing plan in our recommendations. We need to do the Gunn right turn lane first of all. An essential precondition for doing any conversion to three lanes from four is that we have traffic adaptive signalization deployed along the whole corridor. We need that additional efficiency and traffic flow in order to reallocate space in between the intersections when there is an opportunity to do so. We have other electronics improvements we would like to put in; pedestrian in-pavement automated lighting, these V-calm advisory speeds signs and so forth.
pedestrian countdown signals and whatnot. Phase two is really a trial with asphalt curbing. We would need to not landscape however. Landscaping would have to come later. Really, median landscaping should be in phase three. Phase three is frontage landscaping including street trees and lighting as well as median landscaping. In addition, we would also make the curbing permanent, that is concrete and not asphalt.

There are lots of funding opportunities. Here is a good example of funding. Our Homer Undercrossing is $5.4 million and totally funded by external money, the whole thing. It wasn’t easy to get, by the way; we got $5.05 million in federal and state grants. We got a $350,000 contribution from developers. We expect something similar to occur over time with the Charleston/Arastradero Corridor Plan and we list some potential funding sources. We have applied for grants in all of those categories in the past.

If the Commission has any questions I would be pleased to answer them or if the Commission prefers to hold questions until after Terry Bottomley finishes I would be pleased to do that too.

Chair Griffin: What I would like to do actually before we move any further is in order to give me an idea of how many of you wish to speak this evening I would like to encourage you to please fill out a speaker card so we can do our count. Unless any Commissioner wants to ask a question of Joe at this stage we would hear from Mr. Bottomley.

Mr. Terry Bottomley, Consultant: Because Steve did such a good job describing the context and the sort of impetus for the project and Joe did such a good job describing the sort of technical aspects of traffic calming and pedestrian and vehicular safety improvements what I am going to do is use slides to just provide a quick review of the existing conditions, kind of breeze through the summary I did last time of the process, the alternatives evaluations, and go straight then to the current recommended plan and some of the design details associated with that. It will take about five to ten minutes.

The photographs and the aerial photographs take up a lot of memory and are really slow to load up.

Chair Griffin: Thank you. If other members of the public would like to make additional comments you might hold them until the break and then it is easier to contact Staff people at that time.

Mr. Bottomley: This isn’t so bad. I was at the City Council in Redwood City a couple of months ago and no one knew the password to get the computer started. So we were in front of a whole room full of people while we tried to sort of cast about and find out who had the password to get the software started. So at least we are into the program here and that’s good.

Chair Griffin: Joe, while we are waiting for that program to load would you be available to take questions.

Mr. Kott: Please do.

Chair Griffin: Pat.

Mr. Kott: Gayle has made another suggestion as far as how we can do this. She’ll work it.
Commissioner Burt: Joe, earlier you alluded to a study that you have that compares the impact of a reduction from four lanes to three. It seems that that is likely to be at the center of a good deal of any contention that we might have in the community over the proposed plan. First I wonder whether as a follow up to this meeting it might be helpful for Staff to either supply that or a summary of that because I think that is one thing that the community and for that matter the Commission would value going into greater depth on.

Mr. Kott: Yes, thank you Commissioner Burt. That is a very good point. We do have the whole study up on the Charleston/Arastradero website and it is titled, “The Conversion of Four Lane Undivided Roadways to Three Lane Facilities.” We also have another somewhat less formal review of national experience we did in-house up as well. This former study is professionally refereed, so it has passed professional muster. Our own less formal review of four to three conversions around the country was done based not only on a web search but calls to colleagues around the country. We are glad to have people access those on our Web site and do their own poking about on the Internet. The results of both and the conventional thinking in our professional world is that four to three doesn’t reduce traffic volume flow and it has the effect of reducing crashes. When you go the opposite direction, from three to four lanes, Welch documents all of this in his study, there are dramatic rises in crashes. In four to three conversions, the left turn bay makes an important efficiency difference and of course there is less vehicle maneuvering, you might say weaving, when one you have one through lane in each direction.

Chair Griffin: Mr. Bottomley.

Mr. Bottomley: Just to review very quickly. The corridor that we are looking at extends from Foothill on the south and west to Fabian on the north and east, about 2.2 to 2.3 miles. There are a variety of different conditions that occur in terms of configuration of bike lanes and curbside parking and locations of sidewalks and the rest. Throughout there is a constant curb-to-curb cross section distance of 60 feet.

Next slide and we will take a look at some of the conditions. This is looking at the area up by Gunn High School when the addition was under construction. You see a four-lane street with bike lanes on both sides and a combined bike lane and parking lane on the north side. One of the things that you can see right here is that monolithic curb, gutter and sidewalk all one piece so the sidewalk is right next to the curb. That is the condition on both sides of the street. In fact, on the opposite side of the street there is sort of a rolled curb and gutter. There is an issue at certain times of the day with cars parking up on the sidewalk.

Next slide. This condition carries through Arastradero and into West Charleston. Next slide. Here is a view of that area, again a four-lane cross-section, parking and bike lane on the north side of the street shown here too. El Camino, this is approaching El Camino from the east heading west as one of our major pinch points we had to work with in terms of trying to figure out how to more safely get pedestrians and bicyclists across the street working with the existing needs for turning movements and through traffic at the intersection.

Next slide. East Charleston is a bit different in terms of the way the street looks and location of parking and bike lanes. Next slide. The relationship between basically the parking switches to
the opposite side of the street. On Arastradero and West Charleston it is on the north side of the street and on East Charleston it is on the south side of the street. Another difference that affects the sort of quality of life and appearance of the street is that the sidewalk is separated by an eight foot in most places planting strip, which is quite attractive and has consistent street trees and the rest. One of the things that this side over here shows, this is looking over Adobe Creek just to the west of Hoover School actually looking up towards Hoover School, is the midday condition. I think one of the things we had to work with in terms of the traffic analysis was the peak congestion. But for say 22 hours a day, maybe 21 hours a day, the street looks like this a lot of excess capacity, which tends to encourage speed.

Next slide. The final segment from Fabian to Middlefield of East Charleston currently doesn’t have bike lanes. Next slide. It is still the same 60-foot curb-to-curb cross section, four lanes but curbside parking on both sides of the street and no bike lanes. So that is sort of a missing link in terms of a continuous bike lane along the corridor. Next slide.

We got a lot of comments about existing conditions at our workshops. Next slide. Related to all kinds of circumstances, intersections, pedestrian crossings, special locations like the park. Next slide. We tried to translate those recommendations into a sort of a conceptual overall plan not an engineering design plan at this point but sort of big ideas. What this diagram shows are some of the things that Joe just discussed. The orange squares are existing signalized intersections where the current recommended plan would include improve pedestrian crossings and refuges and things like that but also the traffic adaptive signalization. That would increase the through capacity for the corridor as a whole to allow us to propose these kinds of pedestrian and bicycle enhancing improvements.

Next slide. The design goals. Real briefly, the overall design goals are to promote walking, bicycling and transit, to maintain the current vehicle trip times as Joe said and thirdly but not necessarily always last to beautify the street. There are portions particularly the segment the Arastradero-West Charleston segment where there aren’t consistent street trees and other amenities as there are in the East Charleston segment.

Next slide. Our basic design assumption is that we work with in terms of doing the more detailed design plans for the street, conceptual design plans, was to narrow existing travel lanes where we could, to provide corner bulbouts at adjacent or perpendicular intersections from the neighborhoods and bulbouts are sort of extended sidewalk areas that shorten the crossing distance, widen and improve bike lanes, establish a sign program “bike boulevard” or other term that alerts motorists to the fact that this is a special street they should slow down, behave, respond differently than you are used to, provide infill street trees where they are needed where there are gaps or there aren’t existing street trees, construct a typical curb in that section of Arastradero that I mentioned previously where cars park up on the sidewalk to prevent them from doing that and synchronizing the traffic signals with the traffic adaptive program.

Next slide. These are just illustrations of the different types of improvements that we are looking at or including in the plan. Landscaped traffic islands or medians improved pedestrian crossings and enhance bike lanes. Next slide. These are just enlarged views of those images.

Next slide. When we started the more detailed design work after we got through the major ideas we were assuming that we would differentiate the design for the Arastradero-West Charleston
segment from the East Charleston segment. The reason for that was that the existing traffic
counts indicated that this portion of the corridor had higher levels of traffic. We looked at a
variety of both three and four lane alternatives for this portion of the street but one of the things
the traffic models also showed was that over time both the Arastradero and West Charleston and
the East Charleston links or segments would sort of arrive at the same future traffic level. Next
slide. So although we looked at a variety of different configurations for bikes and on-street
parking and street trees and traffic islands for the two segments of the street, actually we looked
at 13 in all and this is sort of an example of the kind of thing that we looked at with a proposed
cross section and a proposed plan that indicated what the changes could be, we in the end based
on input from our stakeholders group and the City Staff and traffic consultants and the rest sort
of arrived at a continuous three lane recommendation for the entire corridor at least to start. One
of the things that is mentioned in the Staff Report and in the Negative Declaration document is
that there will be a trial plan, and Joe mentioned this too, where the sort of hard, with a capital H,
improvements like concrete medians and concrete bulbous and street trees associated with these
things wouldn't be installed right away. What would be installed first would be a temporary or
interim stripping more or less stripped configuration of medians and turn lanes so people could try
it out and see if it worked. Throughout the corridor what we are assuming is that we would have
a consistent wider bike lane, frontage street trees and a center traffic island.

Next slide. We got a lot of comments on our first presentation of traffic islands and medians as
part of the recommended plan. It wasn't unanimous but it was generally a solid majority of
people that felt that the safety and the traffic calming and the bicycle encouragement and the
aesthetic improvements associated with the traffic islands offset some of the inconvenience in
terms of left turn movements. We can talk about that more in a second.

Next slide. We prepared some revised or more finished design recommendations for critique.
This one is for Arastradero-West Charleston and what it shows is what is currently our fallback
position. It is four lane, maintains this segment of the street at four lanes, it installs narrow
islands in the middle of the street so we can still provide the pedestrian refuges and such and still
get some landscaping in the center of the street. It sticks with four lanes and one of the things
that it doesn’t provide are designated left turn lanes at perpendicular intersections.

Next slide. What is currently recommended is a three-lane cross-section with wider medians and
designated left turn lanes at every intersection. What this allows us to do is to have pedestrian
crossings with refuges on both sides of every intersection if it makes sense to do so. So there are
many more potential safe-crossing locations and as Joe said as regards left turn lanes it
rationalizes the traffic. Joe can you go back to the previous slide? One of the issues about going
to the four lane cross section here is we had to figure out a way to allow cars who wanted to
make a left turn to get out of the through lanes which is the problem today before they made a
left. What this shows is sort of a refuge area for cars at an intersection. I is not as good, it is not
as controlled, it is not as programmed as a designated left turn lane.

Next slide. We have a similar recommendation for East Charleston as well, three lanes,
designated left turn lane at every intersection. One of the things I should point out that is
constant throughout the entire corridor in terms of the recommended plan is that there would be
eight foot wide bike lanes painted or tinted on both sides of the street, highly, highly visible bike
lanes, much different than exists today. On the East Charleston segment it would remain pretty
much as it is today with curbside parking and a bike lane on the south side of the street. The bike
lane would be more visible and wider. On the north side because we have a wide bike lane that
would allow for overnight parking which doesn’t exist today. So during the day on the north
side of the street the widen bike lane would function as a bike lane but at night, say from seven
p.m. to seven a.m., it could provide extra frontage parking for the properties along the street.

Next slide. There are a lot of details related to these different design approaches that I am not
going to get into. I assume we will have time to do that this evening. One of the things that we
did then and we have plans on the wall over yonder is take the sort of typical plan sections that
we were just looking at and the big ideas for the corridor as a whole and try and create a layout
plan of lane striping, traffic islands, left turn lanes, right turn lanes, whatever we needed for the
entire corridor. That is what is over on the wall here. We also enlarged that plan so that people
could see what is proposed adjacent to their street. We have some enlarged segments for the
entire plan also up on the wall that shows where traffic islands would be and pedestrian crossings
and those kinds of things.

Next slide. As Joe said there were a couple of hotspot locations that we had to prepare some
more special or custom design recommendations for. One was Hoover Elementary School.
What is currently recommended by the plan is reversing the circulation on the school site. So
instead of entering on the west side driveway and exiting on the east you would enter on the east
and exit on the west. What that does is it takes some of the pressure, the left turn movements,
away from the intersection of Carlson Court and Carlson Circle and allows us to get a longer left
turn lane into the school down by the easterly driveway. This requires coordination with the
school and consent of the school but in terms of access and congestion on Charleston it could
work quite well. I think one of the latest recommendations this doesn’t show is instead of being
able to exit and make a left turn onto Charleston this median island here could be closed. Right
now we are showing it open. What else does this show? One of the things that you can see is
that with the traffic islands in place there are many more opportunities for pedestrian crossings
and refuges for kids on their way to school. Another element of this is the bike lane that I had
referred to before, the eight foot wide bike lane that could serve as overnight parking, can also
work as a right turn lane for the 20 minutes or so when congestion here is at its peak. So folks
entering the school westbound can have a right turn lane into this driveway. That is the current
idea for that.

At Gunn High School, another sort of congestion puzzle, the current plan shows a designated
right turn lane that would essentially be carved out of a portion of the existing right-of-way back
of the curb. To squeeze in a right turn lane that would be controlled with maybe chatter bars or
some sort of a concrete ridge there along the edge of the lane to channel cars directly into the
Gunn driveway and not allow them to jut back or scoot back into the through lanes. So
essentially adding an additional lane above and beyond what is there today for the entrance into
Gunn High School.

Along with that would be changing the configuration of the intersection and signal. Today there
is sort of a pork chop island in the middle of the street that sort of controls when left turns can be
made into the driveway. One of the things that is recommended is that there be a different kind
of an island or pork chop that allows a free right turn into the school from this way and on a left
turn going the other way and keeping them apart on the left turn phase so that these two
movements can proceed simultaneously sometimes.
Next slide. I think I will stop here. Those are some of the main points. We can keep the PowerPoint going to look at some of the more detailed geometry and circulation issues for the plan, as we need to.

Chair Griffin: Joe.

Mr. Kott: Commissioner, I would like to add that Gary Krueger, a principle of the firm TJKM Associates has joined us. So Gary is available to assist us in answering traffic operations questions.

Chair Griffin: Thank you. At this stage do Commissioners have any questions they would like to address to Staff before we open for the public to make their comments? We have some 20 cards this evening, which should give us about an hour’s worth of public testimony. Our first speaker is Wayne Martin. Each speaker would have three minutes. What I would like to do is I will read off three names and maybe you can stage yourself or queue up as they say in the Transportation business. That would expedite the comments. Wayne would be followed by Misao Sakamoto to be followed by Myllicent Hamilton. Welcome Wayne.

Mr. Wayne Martin, 3687 Bryant, Los Altos: A month or so ago there were a couple of guest opinions in the Weekly that indicated that at the outreaches no one had objected to primarily the three lane reduction plan. Then shortly after that there was another guest opinion that claimed that anyone that didn’t agree with this their facts were wrong, they didn’t know what they were talking about and I myself was a little shocked because I have been trying to get hard data out of the Transportation Department about the traffic flows and queues and hadn’t been able to get that at the time that these guest opinions appeared. Subsequent to that I saw in some of the minutes of some of the Transportation Meetings that people were making the claim that Charleston was totally unsafe. Well, I have lived on Charleston for 25 almost 30 years and would not call it totally unsafe at all since 12 hours a day it is dark and the thing is hardly used and it is not very well used on the weekends. So I began to wonder what is going on.

I made a little survey and walked to 100 people over the last month and I have gotten about 40 back, which I will collate and send to you very shortly. I have dumped another 100 off. By and large about seven out of ten of the people that have returned the survey say that they don’t want the road changed. Most of them, whether it is actually safe or not drops down to about 64. By and large I believe you will find that when I can get you these surveys you’ll find that most of the people that live on the corridor have opinions that are quite different than what you have been hearing from people that are pushing this particular plan.

So the question then becomes for me what is the compelling reason to do this? What really is on the table here? When I went to some of the homes they told me that this would help to stop Rickey’s. I just couldn’t for the life of me understand and when I asked them how is that going to stop Rickey’s they couldn’t really tell me. So I would encourage you to recognize this is going far, far too fast, to vote no and to do whatever you can do to slow this thing down so that we can get more people’s voices here to talk about their views rather than a few who seem to have an agenda. Thank you.

Chair Griffin: Thank you, Wayne. Our next speaker will be Misao Sakamoto.
Ms. Misao Sakamoto, 4275 Suzanne Drive, Palo Alto: I am a senior citizen who lives on Suzanne Drive and has lived here for nearly 50 years. Making a left turn on Suzanne Drive has become increasingly difficult and more and more dangerous. The keep clear space on McKeller Lane is not often respected and it is hard to make the break into McKeller to enter Suzanne Drive. I also walk up and down Arastradero Road frequently to do my exercise on Terman walkway and I have noticed that more and more children are now using the bicycle lane and some of the children use the sidewalks because of the limited space. I also use Briones Park and I find that crossing Suzanne Drive entering Briones Park has become very, very risky and dangerous because there are no crosswalks and the drivers do not sometimes stop for any pedestrians walking across Arastradero. Thank you.

Chair Griffin: Thank you. Myllicent Hamilton. Then following Myllicent will be Audrey Sullivan Jacob and Henry Lum and Nina Bell. Welcome Myllicent.

Myllicent Hamilton, 4014 Ben Lomond Drive, Palo Alto: Thank you. On November 18 the Green Meadow Community Civic Affairs Committee organized a special meeting to present to the Green Meadow residents the City Staff’s proposed redesign concepts for Charleston/Arastradero and also some of the findings of the current Charleston/Arastradero Study. Forty-three people attended the meeting. Twenty-nine members voted in favor of the following statement of community position. There was one dissenting vote. There are fewer votes than people here because there is only one vote per household allowed. There was discussion and questions during the meeting. I will read the statement that was approved.

“Green Meadow Community Association supports the implementation of a three lane reduction the full length of the Charleston/Arastradero school corridor with the exception of sections where it is clear that four lanes are needed to accommodate queuing. It is our understanding that the three lane reduction with proposed mitigations will provide safer speeds, widen bicycle lanes, pedestrian refuges, maintain point-to-point travel times, reduce crashes both vehicular, pedestrian and bicyclists. We also understand that the new plans will include painted bike lanes the full length of the corridor and new crosswalks across Arastradero. All of these changes will result in a much safer route to school for our neighborhood’s children and a more pedestrian friendly environment for our residents to throughout the City. These changes are critical on a road that serves more schools than any other street in Palo Alto. Soon Charleston/Arastradero also will serve many new seniors some of whom no longer can drive. The lane reduction plan is consistent with Comprehensive Plan Policy T-39 to continue to make safety the first priority of citywide transportation planning and with City goals to calm residential traffic. It is also consistent with the Comprehensive Plan policies, which require the City to balance traffic circulation needs with the goal of creating walkable neighborhoods that are designed and oriented toward pedestrians, this is Policy L-67. And to improve pedestrian and bicycle access to and between destinations including public facilities, schools, parks, open space, employment districts, shopping center, this is Policy T-14. It also supports Comprehensive Plan Policy T-40, which calls for prioritizing the safety and comfort of school children in street modification projects that affect school routes this is Policy T-40. While we have some concerns about specific aspects of the study and street simulations we support the lane reduction as it seems to be the best solution to the long term traffic safety problems we foresee on the corridor.” That was approved by the Green Meadow Community Association on November 18.

Chair Griffin: Thank you, Myllicent. Nicely timed. Audrey Jacob.
Ms. Audrey Sullivan Jacob, Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce: Good evening Commissioners. I am the Director of Government Relations for the Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce. I am speaking tonight on behalf of the Chamber and we are as concerned as anybody about the safety of this corridor. Our main concern is about the reduction of lanes from four to three along Arastradero. In the traffic consultant’s report, Attachment D to your Staff Report, basically they say that the three lane configuration only works when the carrying capacity is less than 1,000 cars at the peak travel time. You will notice in the Table on page three, Table Two, that the peak traffic is approaching 1,000 or more cars in 2015 and 2015 is known. So it sounds great to have these three lanes and all of that but I would ask you to question Staff about the consultant’s report that it is not feasible for parts of Arastradero to have three lanes.

Also the Chamber would like to see the study to encompass figures from 2025, which I think are available.

Finally, there should be consideration of the grade separation at Alma and Charleston. Thank you.

Chair Griffin: Thank you. Henry Lum. Henry will be followed by Nina Bell, Lee Wieder and Deborah Ju.

Mr. Henry Lum, 4202 Suzanne Drive, Palo Alto: Hi I am the President of Palo Alto Archers Association. Our neighborhood is located on the east side of Arastradero and the only way we can get in and out of our neighborhood is via Arastradero. Some people claim that Arastradero is safe. I can tell you that my wife and I have been rear-ended twice while waiting for a left turn because cars either did not see us or they could not swerve in time and you hear the screeching of breaks and then suddenly you get rear-ended.

We also have a lot of senior citizens and grandparents living in our neighborhood who take their kids to the park. They have an extremely difficult time crossing Arastradero especially pushing baby carriages. As you get older your legs don’t move as fast as you brain tells you to move so as a result you just can’t cross that or you are dodging cars. We see that often. We live on the corner of Arastradero and Suzanne so we have a pretty good idea as to what the traffic is.

We certainly commend Joe for his report. We have been banging on him for two years now and I think that we have finally softened him. A lot of his improvements will make the quality of life of our residents and the safety of our neighborhood children a lot safer and better. Thank you.

Chair Griffin: Thank you, Henry. Our next speaker is Nina Bell.

Ms. Nina Bell, 4245 Los Palos Avenue, Palo Alto: Thank you. I live in the Green Acres I neighborhood, which is on the Terman side of Arastradero. I first would like to say that I commend and am appreciative of all that Joe Kott and the Staff and engineers for listening to the neighborhood, listening to our concerns and looking to address those concerns. As Henry Lum just mentioned, the only way we can get into and out of our neighborhood is from Arastradero. You take your life into your hands as you try to turn into our neighborhood. I have not personally been hit but my hair is getting grayer every time I wait to turn in. I have spoken with other neighbors in our neighborhood and they have been hit multiple times. So if we don’t get designated turn lanes you will leave a situation unsafe on Arastradero. The other thing I have
seen is bicyclists hit up where they come off the bike path trying to cross over where there is no designated crossing to get over to the Gunn side of the street in order to continue on the bike path. We desperately need additional designated crosswalks along Arastradero. It is not safe and constantly I am seeing people cross along at Suzanne or at Clemo to get to the park. Again, it is not safe and we need your help to get this corrected. I thank you.

Chair Griffin: Thank you. Lee Wieder.

Mr. Lee Wieder, 637 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto: Chairman Griffin, members of the Planning Commission I am Lee Wieder a member of the stakeholders group. My comments tonight are not going to focus on the four lanes and three lanes. I think that we really need to do a bit more deliberation and looking at that to see if that indeed will work throughout the entire corridor. I hope that it will.

My comments tonight will really be about processing questions, phasing and funding schedule and CEQA threshold levels for evaluating projects. So specifically you have a memorandum that has been handed to you that I shared with the stakeholders group this morning and you see them copied on there. My comments are not to read this letter but to focus on the questions that are before you. To set it up, number one, the traffic analysis section of the Comp Plan EIR goes out to the year 2010. Two, the Charleston/Arastradero Corridor Study projects traffic analysis circulation mitigations through the year 2015. This is beyond the five years that the Comp Plan EIR analyzes. Question, what are the advantages and disadvantages of limiting the study to 2010 as the Comp Plan EIR has done? What are the advantages and disadvantages of not extending the study to 2025 as you heard from the Chamber, as is being proposed in the consideration of a citywide traffic impact fee? The answers to these questions were as you can see shown by Joe Kott on the sheet here. Number three question, I am flipping to the other side, in this Staff Report today under the Attachment E, Preliminary Assessment of Funding Sources, Exactions on Development page 13 and 14, should there not be some discussion as to credit given against the pending citywide transportation fee to a project proponent who directly funds some elements of the Charleston/Arastradero Plan? Lastly, which I probably consider the most important, is would it take a General Plan amendment to add or to replace any of the present Comp Plan circulation policies with any of the performance standards that are described in the Charleston/Arastradero Corridor Plan? If this were to be proposed, who could propose it and what would be the process step schedules? The responses from Joe Kott are listed here and I hope that your deliberations will take into consideration some of these questions as well. Thank you.

Chair Griffin: Thank you, Lee. It must be Deborah Ju.

Ms. Deborah, Ju, 371 Whittem Drive, Palo Alto: Good evening. I would like to thank Joe Kott and Steve Emslie for their hard work and leadership on the Charleston Corridor Study. The study is very important to Charleston Meadow residents because for those of us living south of Charleston, Charleston is our only access in or out of our neighborhood. If Charleston is not safe we have no alternate route for our children to get to school and currently Charleston is very unsafe. So unsafe in fact that most families don’t allow their children to walk or bicycle to school. It is so unsafe that even many adults choose to ride on the sidewalk because they are afraid to ride in the narrow often-disappearing bike lane.
Our neighborhood association met recently to discuss the recommended safety redesign proposals with a written invitation to the meeting hand delivered to each house. We strongly support a six-month trial of these changes including the three-lane configuration. The three lane configuration is critical to slowing speed along the school corridor, to making room for medians which will make it safer to cross the street and to providing and adequate and continuous bike lane. The three lane configuration is much safer for children crossing the street than a four lane configuration because when there are two lanes in each direction and one driver stops to let a child cross the driver in the other lane often can’t see the child and that creates a very dangerous situation.

We support the three-lane configuration along both Charleston and Arastradero because school children from our neighborhood must go along the entire corridor to get to Terman and Gunn. If the whole corridor isn’t safe you will not see the increase in biking and pedestrian modes, which are needed to make the system work. With regard to phasing it is very important that the six-month trial include the entire corridor so if there is a problem spot it will be discovered and remedied prior to instituting any permanent changes.

We are very excited that the study has made school commute safety its first priority. Thank you.

Chair Griffin: Thank you, Deborah. The next three speakers will be Richard Geiger followed by Dave Cerf and Jean Wilcox. Welcome Richard.

Mr. Richard Geiger, 714 East Charleston Road, Palo Alto: I have lived here over 20 years and I am retired and I spend a lot of time walking the sidewalks and observing what is going on. These studies have been going on for quite a few years and long before Hyatt came along. The situation has really gotten worse. I have noticed over the last at least five years that people drive along the freeway at five miles/ten miles an hour in the rush hour and they come to Fabian to Middlefield where I will concentrate my comments on East Charleston. They come to this open road and they drive as fast as their car will go. It is the speeders that do the red light running. Walking across from Southerland to Grove crossing the street and the cars two blocks away coming at 50 miles an hour it is hard to get across. They don’t slow down, they may swerve around you and they get mad because you are in the street and impeding their flow. So speeding is the main problem.

I have seldom seen any real traffic backup problems. I drive quite frequently in the evening, 5:00 to 6:30, from Arastradero to my home. The only backup is at the train tracks. Other traffic along this corridor turns right and turns left and by the time I get to Middlefield there are very few cars. I had some notes here.

I want to thank Joe Kott and the Transportation Committee for coming up. I strongly support this three-lane version. I think it is essential to narrow the streets and narrow the lanes to reduce the speeding while maintaining at the signal intersections the full width and even making a right turn lane going west on Charleston and Middlefield. If there was a right turn lane there that would speed the flow of traffic because one car making a right turn stopping or one car going straight ahead and stopped for the light prevents all the cars behind it from making a right turn. If there are pedestrians in the crosswalk it delays even further. So adding right turn lanes and left turn lanes and narrowing the street which allows for this is a very good idea. No consideration
has been given I don’t believe for increasing the flow on San Antonio and also limiting trucks on Charleston. This can reduce the volume.

Chair Griffin: Thank you Richard. Our next speaker is Dave Cerf.

Mr. Dave Cerf, 731 Montrose Avenue, Palo Alto: I have lived on Montrose for over 25 years. What I would like to do is support the retention of the barrier that is at the Charleston-Montrose-Louis intersection. We have over 15 smaller kids on our block and what we really need is to prevent people cutting through that section. The barrier has done a good job for a long time and we just want to make sure that it stays. Thank you.

Chair Griffin: Thank you. Jean Wilcox. Do you have a presentation, Jean?

Ms. Jean Wilcox, 4005 Sutherland Drive, Palo Alto: Yes, I have one overhead that is going on. Members of the Planning and Transportation Commission as you can see this is a map of Charleston Gardens. The proposed development on the Sun site at East Charleston and Fabian Way is within two blocks of our neighborhood. The campus for Jewish Life and Bridge Development are proposing to build 380 units of housing to a height of 50 feet on the Sun site, however, they are inquiring about possibly building to a height of 85 feet and adding many more units of housing with a lot more vehicle trips. This has not been taken into consideration in CMR-450 the proposed set of performance measures for the Charleston Gardens corridor, Attachment B, Land Use Assumptions. The unknown number of new residents will increase vehicle trips on East Charleston as they make their way to and from local grocery stores in the Charleston Shopping Center. Unfortunately these new residents will return to the Sun site via Montrose to Charleston and then to Fabian Way. Reducing East Charleston from four to two through lanes will only encourage them to use our neighborhood side streets, which Council promised would not happen.

I would have preferred that Staff had proposed keeping four lanes, ten feet wide, on East Charleston between Fabian Way and Middlefield. This configuration would still allow for wide bicycle paths and if necessary bulbouts for pedestrians to safely cross the street. A set of flashing lights either side of the crosswalk at Louis/Montrose would help pedestrians cross safely. I urge the Commission to proceed cautiously particularly on the section of East Charleston between Fabian Way and Middlefield. Reducing this section of East Charleston from four to two through lanes before we really know how large the development on the Sun site will be is too drastic a solution. I hope however you will include a large sign at Fabian Way, which says, “You are entering Palo Alto.” Thank you.

Chair Griffin: Thank you, Jean. Our next three speakers will be Penny Ellson followed by Rich Ellson followed by Michael Maurier. Penny, if you would introduce yourself, please.

Ms. Penny Ellson, 513 El Capitan Place, Palo Alto: Good evening. I am here tonight as the Co-Chair of the Civic Affairs Committee for Green Meadow Community Association. Here tonight Charleston/Arasradero and to some extent South Palo Alto are being fundamentally redesigned for the future. I would like to take a minute to reflect on why we embarked on this moratorium and study as I hope that the goals that we laid out in the beginning of this process will guide the decisions that we make now.
We set out to make the school corridor safer while maintaining travel times. We wanted to improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists, improve quality of life and enhance visual amenity. Our hope was to ensure a safer, better functioning Charleston/Arastradero in the face of significant new development. We have before us a window of opportunity. Charleston can become a school commute corridor with average speeds below 35 miles per hour or an expressway with average speeds above 35 miles per hour. We get to decide.

There are some that believe that adaptive signals alone would be a step in the right direction for Charleston Road. However, adaptive signals address only one of the five objectives of this study. They would improve throughput on the road but they would do nothing to improve safety, encourage mode shift or provide maximum relief of congestion at intersections, the primary cause of delay on the road.

We have to keep in mind that a primary goal is to make the road safer for pedestrians and cyclists. So speed reduction is very important. Why? Because a pedestrian is nearly twice as likely to be killed by a vehicle moving 35 miles per hour than by a vehicle moving 28. By reducing speeds to 28 we get a 50% reduction in the likelihood of serious injury or fatality in accidents on the school corridor. That is for the general population. The curve is even steeper for children and seniors.

Charleston/Arastradero currently serves a lot of children and soon will serve many more seniors many of whom no longer can drive. A pedestrian friendly road and better shuttle service will be very important to these new Charleston residents.

Mr. Rich Ellison, 513 El Capitan Place, Palo Alto: I live at the same address as Penny Ellison. My name is Rich Ellison and I will finish on a similar theme. One fact that we learned recently was that the primary generator of trips on the corridor is the residents. So we are them. This seems like an excellent argument for a lane reduction given that most of the planned development will be adding to the residences and not the business traffic along the corridor. If you look at much of the planned development it is for residential. If residences are the primary generator of car trips we should do everything we can right now to get people out of their cars and create mode shift.

One of the ways that we can actually get below the 1,000 car mark now and in the future is to get people out of their cars. One of the great sources of vehicle trips in the a.m. is of course the school commute. One of the things that we noticed looking at data, and this is data that was collected from VTA funded survey that Go Fast performed and I believe they covered more than 60% of all the students at Gunn in this survey, was that the distance that students had to commute to school did not correlate that well with how many of them actually bicycled to school. It was the perception of safety along the route. So if you look at people who have to commute along the corridor you can see that Green Meadow and Charleston Terrace are at 12% and seven percent and are commuting one and a half miles and two to two and a half miles respectively.

Now students that are coming from greater distances, one and a half miles, two to four miles and even one and a half miles, they all end up with higher percentages of cyclists making the trip because they don’t have to commute along the corridor. They come sort of from the northern portion they don’t have to come along those unsafe routes. So we would hope that as we are
redesigning South Palo Alto for the future that we can take the time to invest in infrastructure
and an infrastructure that helps us keep people off the roads and in particular take advantage of
the great opportunity to move people off the roads in the morning.

At the present time we have close to 5,000 children and we are forecasting in the studies that you
have seen more than 5,000 students will be attending public schools on the corridor. There are
only 1,200 link volumes even in the 2025 forecast so we don't have a large amount of trips that
we need to get off the corridor. So it is a small percentage of those 5,000 students that need to
move out of cars to shift 100 to 200 cars to keep the road below the 1,000 limit even into 2025.
So I hope you will support the proposed plan that the City Planning and Transportation
Commission has put before you. It provides the capacity for this development and others we are
looking at as well as the necessary road improvements to maintain safety and in particular during
that very unsafe period, the most unsafe period in the week, which is the school commute hour.
So let's follow the inspired lead of our predecessors who planned for future, provide us with
infrastructure by augmenting that infrastructure to define the community that we enjoy today and
one that we will enjoy living in the future. And one where our children can look at the
community that we have created today with some pride as they bicycle and walk to school and
not just sit in a single occupancy vehicle. Thank you.

Chair Griffin: Thank you. Michael Maurier.

Mr. Michael Maurier, 646 Fairmede Avenue, Palo Alto: I live in the Green Acres Association.
As I have been watching this evolve here we, as you know, had yet another school open in our
neighborhood and this time it is a middle school. So we are monitoring the safety issues that are
involved with middle schoolers with particular care as they go through our neighborhood, as we
watch them and observe them daily, where we live on the Arastradero stretch right in front of us.
It is manifestly unsafe, has been for years but it has gotten considerably more so and it is only a
matter of time before under the current configuration we have ... well we have already had one
example on our end of town of what we are going to have. Hopefully it is not of that
seriousness.

We are extremely relieved to see Mr. Kott and company much to my personal great surprise have
done actually a very good job I think of responding to community input. Well, you know what
happens guys, when it does I say so but it isn't often that I say so as you are aware. We are
certainly willing and more than willing, even anxious to try this on an experimental basis. And
you note it is an experimental basis. I think it is noteworthy that the institutions and the
organizations that represent the people who live and work along there, we don't have many that
work, we have schools and neighborhood associations, churches and pre-school organizations
and they are all I believe that you seen from the communications in support of this plan and I ask
you to approve it. Thank you.

Chair Griffin: Thank you. Our next three speakers will be William Cutler followed by Ken
Szutu followed by Sally Probst. William.

Mr. William Cutler, 4114 Park Boulevard, Palo Alto: I live on Park Boulevard between Meadow
and Charleston. The Charleston corridor is the primary ingress and egress that I use to get in and
out of my community and it is also the route that I frequently take on my bicycle between Wilkie
and Foothill Expressway. I would say that the 100 feet on either side of El Camino is one of the
more stressful bicycle experiences that I have in my life.

There are many issues that we could be considering here but I would like to focus primarily on
what I consider the main issue and that is the tradeoff of speed versus safety and neighborhood
tranquility. I am very much in favor of the proposal in that it is in the direction of improving
safety and retaining the tranquility that we have, the residue that there may be left in the world
today of a road that is pleasant to ride on and is pleasant to live near. I have been a Palo Alto
resident since 1958 and I have seen a lot of change and there has been uniformly the direction of
change has been an erosion of the kind of community values that makes Palo Alto a wonderful
place to live. It seems that always the community values of tranquility and pleasantness that we
enjoy are always asked to rollover in favor of growth whenever growth comes along. I think we
have an opportunity here to for once in our lifetime reverse that and retain something which is of
the sort of value which really makes Palo Alto the place that’s nice to live. I would think that
even the Chamber of Commerce would favor that because in the long run it is the community
values which will bring people here and keep the property values and the business values up not
frantic streets.

Chair Griffin: Thank you. Ken Szutu.

Mr. Ken Szutu, 647 Fairmede Avenue, Palo Alto: I am the President of Green Acres I
Neighborhood Association. Green Acres I is the neighborhood right next to Terman Middle
School. We have about 200 residents. We have about probably 800 to 1,000 foot frontage on
Arastradero. Basically our neighbors use Pomona and Los Palos to get in and get out of our
neighborhood. The only way we can go is Arastradero. So you know we are very interested in
the improvement of this corridor.

We have been talking with many neighbors in our neighborhood and I think most of them agree
we need a protected turn lane to get in and get out of our neighborhood. I think you have heard
earlier that people get hit when they are trying to get into our neighborhood and waiting to make
a left turn. Also as an example in the morning when we want to go out of our neighborhood and
make a left turn into Arastradero it is almost impossible or very dangerous. You just have to
look from both sides and see that the traffic is clear from both sides and then you can make a
turn. So I think for our neighborhood a protected turn lane is on the very top of our list. We
really think it will make the whole area safer.

The second point which many people want is safety crosswalk. We say many people walking
because Briones Park is on the other side of the street, so we saw many people walking across
Arastradero like right in front of the Fire Station. I know they are not supposed to do that but
you see many people do that. I think it is very unsafe and if we can improve that situation that
would be great.

The third one is we want to have a bike and pedestrian friendly environment, which I am going
to go into a little bit more detail later.

The fourth thing which most of our neighbors want is to slow down the traffic on Arastradero. I
guess we need to remember Arastradero is a school corridor it is not a major artery and the speed
limit is 25 miles per hour.
Chair Griffin: Ken, perhaps you could have another member of your group finish up your presentation because you have used your three minutes.

Mr. Szutu: Okay, thank you.

Chair Griffin: Pat has a question.

Mr. Szutu: I just wanted to say most of our neighbors recommend to approve this proposal.

Chair Griffin: We have a question for you, Ken.

Commissioner Burt: Could you repeat which intersection you say that you observe quite a bit of pedestrian crossing?

Mr. Szutu: From Suzanne and across to the Fire Station.

Commissioner Burt: Thank you.

Chair Griffin: Our next speaker is Sally Probst.

Ms. Sally Probst, 735 Coastland Drive, Palo Alto: Commissioner Griffin and other Commissioners, thank you. I want to say that this report format was just excellent with the recommendations and then the advantages and disadvantages and then the alternatives. I really highly congratulate the Staff for having come up with this.

There was a question on page 17 whether the Commission should authorize and the Council should authorize the corridor plan in phases as funding becomes available or reduce the scope of the plan to manage the resource impact. I want to speak authorizing the corridor plan in phases. In fact there are five non-controversial items that could be done as quickly as money is available. The first of course is the new signalization system and I am glad that funding is being sought already for that. The second is improving the entrance and exit at Gunn High School on Arastradero. I have a grandchild at Gunn but fortunately she and her friends all walk and take the back entrance so they are not anywhere near Arastradero. But for all the people who are I think that is an important improvement to make quickly. The third is the improvements at Homer School, changing the ingress and egress to the school and with the queuing possibilities there. The fourth is Charleston-Louis-Montrose improving that pork chop in the middle of the street so that people won’t do the strange thing of driving to the left. Retaining it but improving it. The fifth is whatever crosswalk improvements can be made quickly in response to the various requests.

I have some minor points. There was some talk about gateway monuments at a cost of $200,000. I think that is a waste of money. There was talk about removing the pork chop islands on El Camino Real at a cost of $25,000 and I am not sure that removing those would be much help. I use those right turns frequently and it seems to me that if you stop, flash your red light, you stop and you watch carefully for traffic that they simply offer more queuing space than would be if they were removed. So that is a question. This is something that I should have asked the Staff. I am hoping that the three-lane experiment on Middlefield, which I thought was approved, will be
done quickly so that we can see how that improves the traffic in that area. That is near Long’s 
Drug Store that batter. I guess that will do it, my other points are minor.

Chair Griffin: Thank you. Our next three speakers are Joan Marx, Jean Olmsted and Alan 
Snyder. So if those individuals would come forward please. Joan.

Ms. Joan Marx, 827 La Para, Palo Alto: I am speaking for Go Fast at Gunn High School an 
alternative transportation advocacy organization. We warmly support the City Staff efforts to 
improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists on the Charleston/Araldadero corridor and 
thereby increase pedestrian and cyclist travel on the corridor. We admire the careful research, 
which shows that making the street pleasanter and safer for these constituents will not increase 
congestion. We realize that this scenario is counter-intuitive but the actual case studies and 
modeling show it is a reasonable proposition. Go Fast will do its best to publicize this 
reasonableness within the school communities if you will adopt it.

I would like to emphasize certain points that you have heard a number of times tonight. El 
Camino intersection is without doubt dangerous for cyclists. We know what needs to be done, 
we know how to do it and it should be done as quickly as we can get the money. Second, again 
crossings of Araldero at Suzanne which you have heard many times and also where the bike 
path comes into Araldero that is the Hetch-Hetchy parcel, that is right about level with the 
cemetery. These are marked on the map up there. They were little yellow proposed crossings. 
We appreciate the Staff efforts to increase the steadiness of the flow into the Gunn entrance. 
One, by having simultaneous left and right turns into Gunn at the same time safely and second 
having a steady right turning queue in the curb lane going into Gunn. Now the specific way that 
is being proposed, a fifth lane that would be carved out of the sidewalk does not seem to me 
consistent with the largest goals of the whole project but I am hopeful that there would be a way 
of arranging it so that the straight ahead people do not block the right turning queue but without 
carving off the sidewalk on either side. We need that buffer strip for our pedestrians that are 
coming in.

We ask you also, the Commissioners, to make part of your recommendations for phase I the 
institution of a shuttle loop on Charleston/Araldero. Such a shuttle which would circle during 
the morning commute would allow students to arrive at the corridor on side streets and then 
transfer to the shuttle to go west and east along the corridor. Such a shuttle would remove a very 
large number of cars from the corridor at the peak commute time. Thank you.

Chair Griffin: Joan I have a question for you. We may have two questions for you actually. The 
process, you said Go Fast, your organization, would propose to work with the school system to 
promote walking and bicycling? Tell me a little bit more about that.

Ms. Marx: No. What I am saying is it seems to me there is a fear on the part of the Commission 
and also on the Council that you have a counter-intuitive proposition before you, will the public 
receive it well or will this be another sewer drain project? I want to reassure you in the best way 
that I can that there are many people who will respond to the reasonableness although counter- 
intuitive quality of the proposition and that this organization, we, would do our best to make this 
evident to people.

Chair Griffin: Great. Thanks. We have another question for you. Karen.
Commissioner Holman: Just briefly would you describe the shuttle loop that you would advocate?

Ms. Marx: Well, what I would suggest is that, I was trying to think about the size of it. I think you would actually use a rather large bus, as large as the Marguerites that are now being used. You would have a bus that would go up and down, you would start at one end of the corridor and just go up say to Gunn and then it would circle around back down. What you would have to do is sit down carefully and you would work it out. Do you really need two small ones and they need to follow each other in a certain sequence of time? What you want essentially is for students to be able to miss one shuttle for example and then still get to school on time within say a half hour period. It seems to me quite a reasonable proposition. We could pay for it with developer fees and it would take an enormous load off the corridor for those people who feel they have to have their child in a motor vehicle, which some people do. Thank you.

Chair Griffin: Jean Olmsted. Welcome Jean.

Ms. Jean Olmsted, 240 West Charleston Road, Palo Alto: Thank you. I have to confess that my personal dream is a pedestrian refuge in the middle of Charleston at Park. That would help me get across the street. I spend a lot of time waiting on the sidewalk for a gap in both directions and then I often have to run across the street. I hope I don’t miscalculate someday.

I am here to support the plan to add medians and three lanes to make Charleston/Arastradero safer and more attractive. Smarter signals paid for with a grant seem to meet general approval. I don’t want this plan used by developers to justify adding more building with more cars to Charleston before the plan is really in place and it is successful. Until the plan is paid for, until it is built, until we know people are willing to change their car-dependent habits we shouldn’t count on anything.

Chair Griffin: Thank you. Alan Snyder.

Mr. Alan Snyder, 310 East Charleston Road, Palo Alto: I live right on the corridor and I live very close to Hoover Elementary so I see a lot of the safety issues that are occurring on the street. I strongly support this plan. I think it is a great plan. I think the emphasis on safety for bicyclists and pedestrians is really important because we have so many kids on this road. Everyone here knows this but I am just going to repeat it. We have Hoover Elementary, we have Fair Meadow Elementary where my kids go to school, we have Challenger Elementary, Briones is close by to the corridor, then we have two of the three middle schools which are primary bicycle ages for kids, then we have JLS very close to us, we have Terman, which has opened up plus we have Gunn which is one of the two high schools here. So there are a lot of kids on the street. I think one of the things in the presentation that really stuck out for me was the stat of the percentage of people who are actually killed with cars going 40 miles per hour versus 20 miles per hour and the stopping distance. Basically it says if you see a pedestrian 100 feet away from you and you are going 40 miles per hour you are going to hit that pedestrian going 30 miles per hour. If you are going 20 miles per hour you are going to stop before you get to the pedestrian.

I live right on Charleston and one of the things people who are concerned with safety keep track of are things like near misses like if there is a near miss for a plane crash they record it. Well, I
have actually seen a few near misses, all of them related to speed. In one case we had a kid who
was on roller blades and just could not stop before they went into the road and a speeding car had
to basically skid in order to prevent from hitting them. I am really concerned that the speed on
this road is one of the factors that makes it unsafe. This plan addresses keeping the throughput
on the road high while at the same time reducing the speed, which I think is very critical.
Another thing to keep in mind too is that if we can reduce the average speed people can actually
make left turns easier because you are not dealing with a car coming at 40 miles per hour, you
have cars coming at you at 25 miles per hour. So it makes it easier for you to turn and therefore
get out of the way of other cars behind you. That is pretty much the summary of my remarks.

I hope that in the future we go and address the issues on Charleston and El Camino for bicyclists.
We bicycle quite a bit and of the things that we find is that the only time you find it safe to really
cross in that area is basically Sunday morning. So if we can find some ways to address that in
the future I think that would be great. But this plan is great. I hope you guys support it.

Chair Griffin: Thank you. Our next speakers are Milind Pansare, Diane Chambers and Tom
Vician. Milind.

Mr. Milind Pansare, 6212 Suzanne Drive, Palo Alto: Hi. I must confess I am relatively the new
kid on the block having moved from Berkeley and purchased a house on Suzanne very recently,
about eight months ago. Two things have impressed me since then, one has been the process that
I have had the opportunity to be involved in with prior meetings out here in terms of how we
have gone about designing the changes to this corridor. So I am very impressed with the work
that has been done by these gentlemen here. The other thing that has impressed me right away
was that it relatively unsafe to cross, both walk, bike and drive, out of our neighborhood out of
Suzanne Drive anywhere around there.

I have two kids, seven years old and the younger one is three, we use the park, Briones Park,
quite often. We use that intersection at Suzanne and we always cross over because it is too hard
to get to a signal. With a three year old that is miles away. So I think having that pedestrian
crossing there is going to help a lot and I strongly support that proposal.

In terms of biking I have to admit that I am a little ashamed that I have my bike, actually all three
of our bikes, in my garage and I haven’t used them very much because the only place I would
feel safe biking is in the little refuge on Suzanne Drive which isn’t very interesting for very long.
So I would look forward to having better bike access as well so we can get our bikes out at least
as frequently as we did in Berkeley. I would really enjoy that.

The third point is driving. There has been some thought about how this might slow things down.
I can tell you that the left turns as well as the bottlenecks that there are currently along the
corridor are probably more of a problem than the number of lanes there. I know that I make a
left turn to go and drive my older son over to Barron Park School and nobody cares about a
minute lost in the morning when you have two kids to drop off and then get to work. You got to
get there by 8:25 in the morning or you get a tardy slip that goes straight to the heart of every
parent. So I really support having that left turn lane.
In general I just want to say that I support the whole process that has been followed here. Again, I would like to thank the folks who have been designing this. I think it is just great. I hope it all works out.

Chair Griffin: Thanks very much. Diane Chambers.

Ms. Diane Chambers, 687 Arastradero Road, Palo Alto: Hi. I am the Director of Young Life Christian Pre-School. We are halfway between Gunn and Terman schools at 687 Arastradero. We are located in an active church facility. Thank you for your work. We are excited about the proposed walking conditions, the improvements to the walking conditions. In the twelve and a half years that we have been there we have not felt safe taking pre-schoolers on educational walking field trips to either Terman park or the fire station which are two close situations that we could expand our horizons to. Our concerns are with the proposed median that would block our driveway and cause up to 31 parents and six teachers to make U-turns two times each day. Also impacted is the church with Sunday and weekday activities. One, our U-turns may end up at Gunn or Terman adding congestion to these already grid locked areas. By 7:45 in the morning the traffic from Gunn extends past our driveway. Two, our driveway is our only access. There is no other back road or other way to get to our church or school. Three, the median would block emergency vehicles probably coming from Station No. 5 trying to make a left turn into the school. This is a huge concern to the parent. Four, Palo Alto has been concerned about the number of childcare spaces in the City. Currently our school is lucky to be operating at full capacity even in these economic times. Forcing parents to make time consuming and possibly unsafe U-turns may make them reconsider coming to our school. So what I am doing is asking for dedicated left turns through the median into our school and church. Thank you.

Chair Griffin: Thank you. Tom Vician.

Mr. Tom Vician, 3718 Redwood Circle, Palo Alto: I am President of the Fair Meadow Neighborhood Association, which is bounded by East Meadow and East Charleston and Alma and the JLS and Hoover schools on the opposite sides. I was one of the original members about five or six years ago at the original corridor study or at least the East Charleston and of course it has evolved rather nicely into what has now been presented this evening. I do want to express my appreciation to Mr. Kott and Mr. Emslie for having done such effective work with their staff.

Our initial concern as a residential community is the cut-through traffic that began to develop some years ago from Alma via Linder, via Redwood Circle, Carlson, onto East Charleston and back. They try to avoid the stoplight at East Charleston and Alma. Now the further development when Hoover School was opened and became a commute school basically which made a tremendous effect on the life of the people particularly on Carlson Circle. I brought this to the attention of the Staff that on any given morning for at least an hour or so it is almost amazing that nobody as yet been badly hurt because people instead of using the ingress/egress for Hoover actually stop on Carlson and leave off their children. They park in the driveway, across driveways, they double park, they make U-turns in the middle of the street in order to reverse their commute when they have left the children off. When the garbage trucks come through on Wednesday morning it is unbelievable because they have to park in the middle of the street and there are cars on either side. So these are issues that are being addressed by this, which I think is very positive, and what we are concerned about.
Further the notion of safety both for pedestrians, bicyclists and just the improvement of the
aesthetic value of Charleston Road can’t be overestimated. I have lived at my residence for 41
years and I have watched a rapid change in the last five or six years particularly with those
changes at the Hoover School and so on bringing in more traffic during the peak hours and in the
afternoon. This is also a factor our neighborhood has now become more youth oriented. Young
families have moved in and it represents more of what it was when I moved in many years ago.
So we have a number of people who want to take their children to school and they do in fact
walk to Fair Meadow, JLS and Hoover. But the traffic and the safety on this corridor have a
huge effect on the effectiveness of their continuing to use it both for bicycling.

The next thing that I wanted to mention is that the bicycle street in Palo Alto, the Bryant Street,
ends and comes onto Redwood Circle and then proceeds on Carlson Circle into the Green
Meadow area. In the morning this is an area that is not only used by the bicyclists, and I watch
them in the morning, but it also is a commute lane for the Palo Alto Shuttle. It is a very difficult
thing. Thanks again to the Staff.

Chair Griffin: Thank you. I have the last three cards here. We have one more. I am going to
say that we will stop the cards now. We will be taking a break here as soon as we have finished
up with these last four speakers. They are first of all Dave Ramsey followed by Betty Lum
followed by Lydia Tan and finally Peter Taskovich. So if speakers could come down that would
be helpful. Dave Ramsey.

Mr. Dave Ramsey, 3817 Carlson, Palo Alto: Hi I am one of the people that Tom just talked
about living on Carlson here and impacted by the school. I would like to echo his thoughts. He
actually stole most of my thunder since I was going to talk about the same issues.

I have seen a very large paradigm shift since the Ohlone School transitioned to Hoover from
becoming a neighborhood school to a commuter school. Although I very much appreciate and
support the plan as it is envisioned I don’t see that it particularly addresses the cut-through traffic
issue and that in conjunction with the traffic that parks and does illegal U-turns in front of our
houses every morning and particularly Wednesday as Tom mentioned with the garbage trucks
blocking things. It is only a matter of time before there is a serious injury or death. There has
already been one death at that intersection in years past. I certainly don’t want to see it happen.
I am witness to this every morning. I am a runner, I’m a walker, I’m a cyclist, I use all modes of
those to get to and from work in addition to driving. It is a very serious problem to me. So
basically as the conjunction of the school traffic and the cut-through traffic and I just don’t see
any mitigation to the cut-through traffic by this plan.

I also wish you very good luck in trying to work with the school to change the ingress direction
into Hoover, as it was many years ago when Ohlone was there. The other thing that I heard this
evening was using a bike lane as a right turn entrance in the mornings to Hoover, which
unfortunately I think is a very bad idea because as a cyclist it becomes very difficult to get
around cars in the bike lane. Particularly that time of morning the people who use that bike lane
in the westbound direction are students who are going to Gunn and they are always in the bike
lanes there. So it creates a very dangerous situation. Thank you very much.

Chair Griffin: Thank you. Betty Lum.
Ms. Betty Lum, 4202 Suzanne Drive, Palo Alto: I have lived here for 39 years and am so delighted that something might finally happen to calm the traffic on Charleston/Arastradero. I really urge you Commission members to really seriously consider the wonderful work that Mr. Kott and his group have done and want to thank them very, very much. I would like to urge you to seriously consider the dedicated turn lanes. I have personally been rear-ended turning into Suzanne Drive. I have been paranoid about getting on my bicycle on the City streets because I have also been tapped by a car, landed on the hood, didn’t get hurt but hurt my dignity very much. I have been quite afraid since then to ride the City streets. So I would like to see dedicated turn lanes, a crosswalk hopefully at Los Palos and Arastradero or Suzanne and Arastradero. There are lots of senior citizens going to the park with their charges. Lots of our citizens, our neighbors, walk to Walgreen’s, which I think, is very nice. I personally had said initially why a Walgreen’s when there is Long’s down the street? People used to say well we can walk there. My husband and I find that we walk there all the time anymore, even transferred our prescriptions there. So if you would please consider the work that Mr. Kott has done, dedicated turn lanes, three lanes and the crosswalk we would really appreciate it. Thanks very much.

Chair Griffin: Thank you. Lydia Tan.

Ms. Lydia Tan, 360 West Charleston Road, Palo Alto: Good evening. I have been fortunate to be a member of the stakeholders group in my capacity as Vice President of Bridge Housing Corporation. As you know we are working with the JCC on the Sun Microsystems site.

I would like to thank Staff. They have done a fabulous job. The public process has been really great. As I said I had the opportunity to meet every other Wednesday since July 9 with a really great group of folks. While I am at those meetings, as part of my job, there are a number of community members who are spending a lot of their time being very engaged in this process. I just want to thank the stakeholders group in addition to Staff and all the folks who have come out to committee meetings. It has been a really great process for me to see.

On a personal note, I have lived on West Charleston Road for 12 years now. My kids have grown up there, attended four of the schools that are along the Charleston/Arastradero corridor including right now both my sons bike to either Terman or Gunn. So I am very much aware of all of the issues along Charleston. I am personally very much in favor of the Staff recommendation even though it means my parking is going to turn out to be limited hours only I am willing to give up unlimited parking in exchange for a better corridor.

In my professional capacity with Bridge we also are very much in favor of the Staff recommendation and would urge the Commission to try and act on this tonight. I know it has been a long night and will continue to be a long night but we are really quite impressed with how quickly the process has gone and hope that you can stay with the commitment of being done by the end of January.

There was one comment made by a previous speaker about the Environmental CEQA document and the potential traffic impact of our particular proposal. I just want to assure you we haven’t settled on a proposal yet. We have a number of proposals we are thinking about but none of them would have any impact at all on the Environmental documents that have been proposed and submitted to date. Thank you.
Chair Griffin: Thank you. Our last speaker is Peter Taskovich.

Mr. Peter Taskovich, 751 Gailen Avenue, Palo Alto: I am a 40 year resident of Palo Alto, grew up here and still live here. I have concerns about reducing the through traffic lanes from four to two. There are real concerns expressed by speakers here about safety issues around the Hoover School, about the at grade crossing of the train tracks at Alma especially when they are going to go to three tracks in the near future. I have no problems with the traffic study addressing those concerns. I do have concerns about going down from four to two or three lanes. I think it is going to create congestion, a great deal. I think the Staff is being overly optimistic that it will not, that their mitigation of timing lights will work. I think it is going to create a much worse traffic jam during rush hours with two lanes which is going to encourage more people to cut-through the circles and cut-through Ely and cut-through my street, Gailen Avenue, which is about a block away. So I have no problems trying to calm the traffic down I just think it is very unrealistic that — right now I think four lanes of through traffic is just about right for the Charleston corridor. It does get congested during rush hour. You are always going to have congestion in rush hour but for most of the time it is nice. That is one thing I do like about living in South Palo Alto is that we don’t have the congestion that you guys have here in North Palo Alto, Middlefield Road and Embarcadero Road. It is minimal congestion right through peak hours. If you go down to two through lanes you are going to have nightmare backup problems and people are going to start racing through the neighborhoods trying to avoid Charleston. The Staff says they can accommodate 3.7 seconds cars with down to two or three lanes. That is not realistic. That means 3.7 seconds every minute for every hour during peak hours and with the stoplights there is going to be congestion. I am basically opposed to cutting down to two lanes. I am not opposed to mitigations to help the safety around the school area or having a below grade crossing for pedestrians at Charleston because I think there are some safety concerns for the children and the residents of the area. But I think it is a big mistake to narrow it down to two lanes. If you want to maybe narrow it down as a compromise to two lanes right at the heart between Carlson and Alma just to make a slight choke point to reduce the speed of the traffic that’s fine but I think most of Charleston should remain four lanes through traffic. Thank you.

Chair Griffin: Thank you. That was our last speaker and I am now closing the public hearing on this item. The Commission will now enjoy an eight-minute break.

I would like to call the Commissioners back to session, please. If you would all enjoy a seat we will recommence the meeting session. We need one more Commissioner and we will start this.

I would like the Commissioners to consider a way of framing this discussion. We have an SR here with 19 different items on it and perhaps an approach would be to discuss briefly, I say briefly I hope we could go through briefly, some of the general items before we get into some of the more specific items. What I am suggesting is that item number one, which is on the automated signal technology, item number two is on raised median refuge, number four is deployment of radar readout speed advisory signs and five has to do with bulbouts, seven is continuous bicycle lanes, eight is painted bicycle lanes and nine is improvements in the shuttle service. Those perhaps, I’m saying perhaps, being less controversial we might take those first and then come back and deal with for example number ten which gets into the three lane versus the four lane approach. Bonnie.
Commissioner Packer: With all due respect Michael, I kind of see this plan as a big project, which is more on a design concept level. I don’t know that I want to go into a nit-picky detail discussion of each item. I am looking at this project as one big collective. It is not a piecemeal kind of thing. It is a whole lot of things that are part of a big picture. I see this plan as a big picture. So I don’t know if I want to go through on an item-by-item but to talk more of how we feel about the concept in a more general sense. There may be one or two areas that we have specific questions about that need some discussion that Commissioners feel free to raise. I think it would be more efficient if we talked about it as a whole plan rather than taking it apart as 19 different items because I don’t see it that way. I don’t know how the other Commissioners feel.

Chair Griffin: Well, anyone else have any comments one-way or the other? Karen.

Commissioner Holman: I am more of a like-mind with Bonnie. I think we will each have probably concerns in different areas and maybe as those concerns and those particular points come up we can chime in on that issue. I really do agree with Commissioner Packer that we probably don’t need to take item by item because some of the issues I think are not going be controversial among us. That’s my instinct.

Chair Griffin: I am sorry I didn’t hear you.

Commissioner Packer: I also have a couple of questions for Staff. We haven’t done that yet.

Vice-Chair Cassel: The idea was to try to ask the questions in clusters so that we would be working down some of the general questions and then another segment and another segment.

Chair Griffin: Anybody else have a comment one-way or the other?

Commissioner Burt: I guess I need to understand what Commissioner Packer is envisioning. Michael, I think what I understood you to be talking about was perhaps breaking some of the non-controversial issues. Another approach might be to group them according to subject matter and have a discussion on them on that basis. So I would be open to looking at some way to break up a laundry list and I thought that was what you were attempting to do. So maybe we should talk about how to best do that.

Chair Griffin: My take on it is that because Phyllis and I discussed this earlier this afternoon, how to go about attacking this, she and I did in fact work to break it out a little so that we could look at the issues under a subject matter heading. I am saying that I have three people that are in favor of that approach so consequently I would like everyone to come along with that and let’s give it a try and see how it works out.

Therefore we would start with the first item actually, which is the automated signal technology. The thought here is that if you had any questions about that we would then address the signal system. Bonnie.

Commissioner Packer: I have one question. I am really looking forward to seeing one of these technologies adopted and bought and working. My question was with El Camino since it is a state highway would Cal Trans be cooperating in giving us the data that we would need and how far up and down El Camino would you need it in order to incorporate the information you need.
at that point. I don’t know if that is also a question that is relevant for Alma as well. I was just
wondering how that works.

Mr. Kott: Well, we definitely would have to consult with them. El Camino is their roadway. To
do traffic adaptive you have to have very good and very sophisticated detection of vehicles. Our
hope is that they will want to do the very same thing on El Camino Real. I think they are pretty
receptive to traffic adaptive. They have been working with Menlo Park on a section of El
Camino Real with similar technology. I don’t envision a lot of problems. The idea of
optimizing efficiency at intersections is really not very controversial.

Chair Griffin: Pat.

Commissioner Burt: Joe, two questions. First is the traffic adaptive signalization planned also
for San Antonio and might that provide some relief for Charleston corridor?

Mr. Kott: Well, San Antonio is a multi-jurisdictional road, as the Commissioners know, so it is a
little bit difficult to do a corridor like that. We would like to do that with our partners in
neighboring communities. I should say we have already applied for funding for five corridors to
automate signal operations. They are our five residential arterials, which means Middlefield too,
Middlefield and Charleston/Arastradero and Embarcadero and the residential portion of
University. Over time we would like to do all the arterials in Palo Alto, including San Antonio,
but we would have to have good cooperation and shared funding from our neighbors to do that.

Commissioner Burt: It is probably difficult for you to estimate but do you have any sense of the
degree to which that efficiency improvement on San Antonio might relieve traffic on
Charleston?

Mr. Kott: We have an appendix in the Staff Report that discusses experience in this country and
around the world with traffic adaptive, which really is not exactly brand new, variations of it
have been around since the mid 1970s but it has gotten much, much better. We may look for,
well, our midrange estimate is 20% increase in efficiency. Some experiences as you know from
reading that that attachment goes up well above one-third increase in efficiency. San Antonio is
subject to the same kind of range, 15% to 30% is a reasonable guesstimate as far as improved
throughput and reduced delays.

Commissioner Burt: Then finally on Attachment D there is a reference to collector streets
generally carrying 900 to 1,000 vehicles per hour per lane. Is that influenced by the traffic signal
efficiency?

Mr. Kott: That is a mistake in nomenclature. The intent was to discuss arterials not collectors.
That is, our major streets. The governing number is 1,000 cars in a lane at peak hour. If the
figures get much higher than that then there are problems that cross-street drivers and people
entering and exiting driveways experience. The Commission may wish to discuss further this
whole issue in relationship to Arastradero Road.

Chair Griffin: Joe, in item number one you say on the third sentence this is an essential
precondition. You are talking about the implementation of the automated signal system, you say
that this is an essential precondition that should be met prior to reducing the number of travel
lanes in any section of the corridor. I am thinking all through this study you have emphasized the absolute paramount position of this system calling it a centerpiece and other words. Why did you say this is an essential precondition that should be met? I am thinking that it must be met. It has to be there or the rest of this system doesn’t work. Am I misunderstanding that?

Mr. Kott: Commissioner Griffin it was an instinctive politeness that caused me to use the word ‘should’ and not ‘must.’ Really it must be. We have to do this before we reduce the number of travel lanes.

Chair Griffin: I am greatly relieved at that answer. Thank you. Bonnie.

Commissioner Packer: I understand that when you factor in all the projected growth with existing number of cars however are there some safety advantages that you can achieve right now with three lanes, the dedicated left turn lanes that you can do? Let’s say it takes a long time to find the money for this traffic adaptive and it takes a little time to implement because software is sometimes finicky. Because we are not yet at the 2015 levels of traffic volumes is it possible that you could say well, if the traffic is at this point we could implement the three lanes in some portions of this corridor even before we have the traffic adaptive signals? Just because we heard about all the safety advantages I just wonder about that.

Mr. Kott: That is a good observation Commissioner Packer. As you know the corridor right now can sustain the three-lane cross-section. We are being very conservative though. We don’t want to have the three-lane section and never be able to put in the traffic adaptive because of money or something else and then find ourselves in a gridlock situation in the future. So again it is kind of an instinctive conservatism.

Chair Griffin: Phyllis.

Vice-Chair Cassel: You keep talking about the time that people will travel in the corridor. What is the time to travel in the corridor?

Mr. Kott: You know, I don’t remember offhand. All the data I remember is in reducing the trip time. So I really should have been prepared on that question and I’m not. As I mentioned earlier the reduction in trip time is one to three minutes. I don’t recall what we said is the current trip time. My boss, Steve, has made a very good suggestion. We will look that up and get back to you.

Chair Griffin: Are there any other questions or comments about the signal system and item number one? If not, we go to number two which talks about the raised median pedestrian refuges at selected intersections. Any questions? Karen.

Commissioner Holman: I do have a question about this one. Actually it is probably a two-part question. One question is I believe it was at the joint session with Council that Ms. Chambers spoke about the school and worried about U-turns being forced there and also some people have made comments about having to ultimately make U-turns also to get in the direction they want to go because they won’t be able to go but one direction out of their driveways. Could Staff address that especially having to do with the school?
Mr. Kott: I might ask Terry to follow my comments but if we need to of course we could put a median break in to accommodate a site like that school. A school does generate a fair amount of traffic in the mornings of course. Individual driveways are another issue. It is clear if you have medians along some portion of a roadway and you have driveways there too you are going to force people to make U-turns. We would be concerned with a lot of U-turns. Terry, would you like to follow on?

Mr. Bottomley: Sure. In fact the latest plans that we sort of heard this concerns in the last hours and we added a left turn break in front of the school on the plans that are up on the wall. So it looks like we can fit one in there to accommodate a direct left into the driveway. It is tricky because it is a short block but it looks feasible.

Vice-Chair Cassel: Before you go, because the question is the same. This is a pre-school, there are other churches and pre-schools on this corridor and there are other houses. With these medians obviously we are going to have to be making U-turns and that is going to be common. We do it all the time on El Camino. Is the average car going to be able to pull into that left pocket and make an easy U-turn?

Mr. Bottomley: We are assuming that if they do it at an intersection yes because there is the adjacent street to turn into. Also where we have the extra width provided by the bike lane and there is width with the median. So just to give you an example, if you are in a left turn lane, the space you have to turn into to your left is you have six feet of median to the left, you have ten feet of lane, that is 16 feet to turn into and if you need it you have an additional eight feet of bike lane.

Vice-Chair Cassel: This will be necessary say to get into Stevenson House and you would have to turn at Nelson.

Mr. Bottomley: Right. But in terms of the U-turns in general, most of them we have been assuming are going to be for residential folks who have driveways that intersect the street and the street facing houses and driveways are not consistent along the corridor. It is probably about 50% or maybe a little bit more of the frontage has street facing driveways. So it is not like every house would need to do that to get into their driveways. Lots are on side streets. There would be some but I guess my point is not every property that exists along this street enters its driveway from the street. Quite a few are from side streets.

Chair Griffin: Karen.

Commissioner Holman: Follow up to that. Is there any disadvantage to having breaks in medians to minimize the U-turn aspect and to minimize the frustration potentially of some residents? I am anticipating frustration that might lead to some consternation and opposition to a program in its trial phase that we would like not to encounter.

Mr. Bottomley: Well there are a couple of segments that are long without cross streets where you might have to go a ways. I think there is one between Nelson and Carlson for instance. But in most cases the adjacent streets or intersecting streets are pretty close. So you wouldn’t have to go far out of your way, I guess is what I am saying, in terms of making a left turn to get back to where you want to go in terms of the frontage property. The first part of your question I think
though was it there a tradeoff between having more median breaks to provide more access and safety or through traffic, etc.? Generally, and Gary from TJKM can help me, in general the fewer breaks you have the more efficient the street is because there is less crossing, there is less turning movements in terms of less possibilities of a conflict. The more that you have the more the chances for conflict. Today you have sort of infinite chances for conflict because you can take a left turn anywhere from the center left turn lane. The more median you have it reduces it. So I think we have tried to keep an even spacing of breaks consistent with a typical block length of about 300 feet sort of going down the street but not consider seriously having a lot more breaks than that for that reason, the sort of in and out and left turn movements. One of the ways that we get some efficiency and maintain the travel time that is desired for the corridor is not to have too many of those crossing movements. They are controlled they are at streets. There is a direct tradeoff in terms of the efficiency and safety of the street and how many breaks there are.

Commissioner Holman: Not to beat a dead dog on this but just to follow up on that with on little other question is that the people who would be causing those interruptions would be the people who are living on the corridor. So sort of common sense tells me that they wouldn’t try to do that during the peak hours of traffic but for the vast majority of the rest of the day it would afford them the opportunity to take the shorter, least inconvenient way. Am I just being naïve that people wouldn’t try to take it during the heavy commute hours too?

Mr. Bottomley: Some would. Human nature is what it is it is hard to predict. One of the things that we are trying to avoid is having – when we have the left turn pockets at the intersecting streets that takes up a certain amount of space. One of the things we would have to have room for to have intervening left turn breaks is room to have a left turn pocket that a turning car wouldn’t cut through. I mean the lengths of the median segments are kind of restrictive in terms of allowing those additional breaks. As I said, there are a couple of segments where distances between side streets are long and we have proposed a couple of median breaks where there isn’t a street just to reduce the length of travel that people have to make to make a U-turn. In a lot of areas it is really tight, the blocks aren’t that long and it is hard to squeeze in another median break say between two left turn lanes.

Chair Griffin: You want to respond to that as well, Joe?

Mr. Kott: Actually we have an answer to Commissioner Cassel’s question. Depending on direction and depending on the time of day our approximate through trip time is about 12 minutes on the corridor, existing.

Chair Griffin: Bonnie.

Commissioner Packer: I wanted to ask you Michael are we going to also if we ask a question on a subject can we make our comments now? Was that what you were thinking?

Chair Griffin: Yes, if you would like to do that, yes.

Commissioner Packer: Well, okay. Like if I wanted to make a comment on the median issue would it be appropriate for me to do that now since we are on the topic?

Chair Griffin: Would you like to do that? That would be fine with me.
Commissioner Packer: All I would like to say is that the design of the medians and where the breaks would be most appropriate I believe our traffic engineering experts will do their best to design a median system, if you will, that will achieve the most optimum safety design balancing the convenience and the other issues that were just discussed and that when we get to a point of making our recommendations to Council that we can capture it in those general terms as opposed to saying they should have a median break at this intersection and not at this intersection. I don’t think we have those details in front of us. That is all I would like to say.

Chair Griffin: Phyllis.

Vice-Chair Cassel: If we are making comments I am concerned if these medians come too often we lose a couple of other factors. The idea is to have some plantings in these medians to create some visual calming and we won’t have that if we have too many changes. We will have an Alma Street situation where we have a lane down the middle in which people are allowed to turn, in that case they often don’t go left but there is one down there that you can turn on and that isn’t a very pretty place. The idea here is to make this aesthetically pleasing so that we want to be there and that helps calm us. I don’t think this distance is going to be too great.

Chair Griffin: Karen.

Commissioner Holman: I just didn’t want to give people or Commissioners the impression I was littering the medians with these turns. I was just thinking there might be some places where it might be quite appropriate and just trying to get a better understanding of what the plan is.

Chair Griffin: If there are no other questions or comments on the raised median item then we would move now to item number four which is deployment of additional fixed electronic radar readout speed advisory signs along the corridor. Are there any questions or comments on item number four? Pat.

Commissioner Burt: Just a question. On number three, the lighted in-pavement pedestrian, are you going to skip over that for now?

Chair Griffin: For the moment I was.

Commissioner Burt: That’s fine. My comment was on that and I will wait.

Chair Griffin: So no further comments then on the radar readout signs. Item number five has to do with bulbouts extending from the curbs to reduce pedestrian crossing distances at selected intersections. Any questions or comments on that?

Vice-Chair Cassel: Just to support the Staff recommendation. Those will be evaluated intersection by intersection.

Chair Griffin: Pat.

Commissioner Burt: I am generally a fan of bulbouts but I wanted to ask Staff what lessons we might have learned from the problems that Menlo Park had on Santa Cruz Avenue’s installation
and the feedback that they got. What are we doing to not have that sort of reaction after the fact that they experienced?

Mr. Kott: Here we go. We generally don’t like to make comments about our neighbors.

Commissioner Burt: A hypothetical community where there might have been adverse reaction after the fact.

Mr. Kott: It is always difficult when you put fixed objects in the roadway that cause cyclists on the one side to veer away from them and motorists veer away on the other side and bring them closer together. So you have to be very careful about the placement of these kinds of fixed objects. Since one of the major objectives of this corridor plan is to improve cycling safety we would take particular concern that we are not inducing vehicles and bicyclists to come to close quarters.

Chair Griffin: Bonnie.

Commissioner Packer: This is a quickie. Sometimes when there is a pedestrian activated button you could press to cross the street but there is a big distance the bicyclists can’t get over there to press it. So if you have a bulbout would you have a button for the biker if it were a signalized intersection?

Mr. Kott: I think I will defer to Gayle Likens here. We have had some experience with cyclist level actuation and Gayle can address that.

Ms. Gayle Likens, Transportation Planner: We have gotten away from putting curbside push buttons for bicyclists per se in recent years because it requires the bicyclist to hug the curb to get to the signal to change the light, when they might not want to be right next to the curb depending upon whether they are going straight or turning. The pedestrian push buttons that are on the sidewalk for pedestrians are generally not situated properly to be accessed by bicyclists, so you would have to have a separate button for bicyclists. There are other ways of dealing with this. One is to have an in-pavement loop detector, which we haven’t done either, but that is something I think we are going to be looking at in the future. Then, if this corridor were to convert to overhead video detection, then you wouldn’t need to have any kind of physical in-pavement or curbside button because the video camera would detect everyone in the roadway including bikes.

Mr. Kott: I need to add very quickly, very quickly, on video detection these are digitized video images. These are not images of people and so forth. No civil liberties issues here, the computer just simply senses through the digitization of the image that there is something that classifies as a bicycle there.

It is likely we will move to video detection with traffic adaptive both for vehicles and for bicycles.

Chair Griffin: No other comments or questions on that one. I propose moving to number seven now which is on the next page. That has to do with the provision of continuous bicycle lanes along the entire corridor to enhance cycling safety. Any questions or comments on that? Phyllis.
Vice-Chair Cassel: Yes, I am delighted that you are talking about paving it and marking it and all those good things and having a continuous line through. My concern is with the width of lanes. I am really concerned about getting the lane so wide that people start driving in them. I know coming down Middlefield Road turning onto Charleston on a right hand turn there that cars get in that lane and turn right all the time. They use it as a right turn lane. I think I was on that road today and there was another spot that I ran into the same thing. The lanes were so wide, in this case it was a real disadvantage because the cars were just tooling down that lane and turning right and they think they can and they think they have the right to do that. So how do you deal with that? Would it not be better just to have six-foot wide consistent lanes rather than letting them get eight feet? Can you keep them wide enough in the intersections?

Mr. Kott: Eight feet, some motorists will act like that in eight-foot bike lanes but we think most won’t, but we may be optimistic.

Vice-Chair Cassel: Lots of them do it.

Mr. Kott: Nine-foot lanes are perfectly fine for very short sections for travel lanes. For very short sections like at intersections if you really need to get the additional space for another turn lane or something. Motorists use these okay. Eight-foot bike lanes, yes, some motorists might behave badly. So we may have to frustrate them with somewhat less than eight feet, maybe seven and a half feet.

Chair Griffin: I would like to speak in support of Joe’s comment and the Staff Report. My experience on a three-lane road is with Willow Road, which is in a theoretical neighborhood community that will remain anonymous. Willow Road has what I consider to be what I consider to be eight foot wide bicycle lanes in some areas and I do not see anybody, we are all nose to tail going down our single travel lane like is being proposed here tonight on the corridor, and nobody is veering off. One of the things that does happen is that people do use those wide bicycle lanes to help back out of their driveways. Now I don’t know if that is envisioned in your scheme or not but I have seen that happen. It seems to be an ameliorative effect because otherwise they would be backing into the stream of traffic. This gives them some maneuvering room. If you want to comment on that.

Mr. Kott: I don’t think we would officially endorse that but it does happen and if there are no bicyclists around I suppose it is harmless enough. I think about a condition we have on say the section of Charleston between Fabian and Middlefield where people are induced to bike on the sidewalks. That is far more dangerous than the condition you have observed because we have a lot of driveways along there and there is a potential for collision because drivers are thinking about the roadway not about the sidewalk with crossing bicyclists. So I think in a practical sense, Commissioner Griffin, I think you are right, it is an ameliorative measure but we wouldn’t advertise it as such.

Chair Griffin: Karen.

Commissioner Holman: I had another question about this and it has to do with the eight-foot width and you said perhaps something smaller. It was mentioned earlier that these eight-foot wide bicycle lanes could be used in the evening time, say from seven to seven, for on street parking. Well, I am not sure I see that as a positive because especially in the summer time it is
light until nine o’clock or so and bicyclists you don’t want to discourage them from using the bike lanes and it is not real healthy for bicyclists to be sharing a place where there are cars parked. So I would have that as another cautionary about eight foot wide bicycle lanes. Maybe I am being over cautious or overly concerned but it didn’t sound very healthy to me.

Mr. Kott: Big road projects and plans and so forth are just a conglomeration of tradeoffs and the bias is always towards safety and toward making a roadway serve more people more of the time. I think you are right, we are not providing two-way 24/7 cycling opportunities on the corridor and that is a legitimate concern. I must say that parking in Palo Alto, like in every other community, curbside parking has a value to residents. I sometimes joke and Steve has to yank on me when I do, that the third unwritten rule of traffic planning in Palo Alto concerns parking. I can’t remember the first two. I am just joking. The third one is “don’t take someone’s parking away”. The first one is of course safety first. It is all a tradeoff. I don’t know whether Gayle you have comments about full-day cycling lanes.

Ms. Likens: We have a history in Palo Alto on our collector streets of having this tradeoff between parking on one side of the street all of the time with parking permitted in the evening on the other side of the street, in the seven-foot bike lane. That is a balancing of the bike lanes and the parking demands. You can find that on North California, on Louis, on Loma Verde and other places.

On this corridor, we really have the same situation on Charleston and on Arastradero. On the south side of Arastradero, on the Terman side, right now we have program parking because that bike lane is only seven feet wide and parking is permitted in the evening. Then on Charleston on the Hoover School side we have programmed parking the narrow bike lane. So there isn’t a tremendous amount of on-street parking that occurs in this corridor, but parking is permitted in the narrow bike lane at night. This plan will increase the width of the bike lanes up to eight feet. It is not desirable, but it is a tradeoff between meeting the competing needs in this plan to provide landscape medians, some parking and narrower traffic lanes and achieve the goals of the program.

Mr. Kott: I would like to add on the question of motorists violating the bicycle lane and using it as a travel lane, Terry just pointed out something I think important to me that I would like to share with the Commission. Painting or tinting the bicycle lanes a color will likely inhibit that behavior. We would like to find that out. It seems to me that a clear signal sent that this is a bike facility will likely cause better driving behavior. We can’t guarantee it will eliminate all that stuff though.

Chair Griffin: Any further comments? Then we will move to number eight that was a nice segue actually which involves tinting or painting the bicycle lanes for higher visibility along the entire corridor. Are there any questions or comments? Karen.

Commissioner Packer: I think it is a great idea. During the break I was raising the question with Gayle about the concerns that you have when kids are in a bike lane but you have these dedicated or encouraging right turns like into Hoover School or into Gunn. It creates sort of conflict with the bikers and the right turn makers. I think when something is striped or painted a different color as a motorist you are going to be really careful with your crossing and you might actually look to see if there is a bicyclist. Also it might help the bicyclists remember that this is a special
lane and they have to behave differently. So I think it is a really good thing and I think it will affect the behavior of both the motorists and the bicyclists. It might solve that problem.

Commissioner Holman: I think it is a really good idea too. It says disadvantage, less attractive. Well, why would we want to put up unattractive signs? The other thing is since this is a school commute corridor instead of just denoting this as a bike lane and I think it might promote safety more is to do some kind of designation visibly that this is a school bike commute corridor so that that’s implemented in this painting or tinting or design that goes on here.

Mr. Kott: It is a really good idea. We are great believers that visibility and awareness through bike lane tinting and good signage that people notice is a big plus. We would endeavor not to put up ugly looking signs.

Commissioner Holman: Last comment is that I would hope that a lot of this indication could be done on the pavement itself and there wouldn’t be too much need for vertical signage.

Mr. Kott: As long as we stripe the words ‘bike lane’ we would be able to use other symbols if we need to on a demonstration basis, yes.

Chair Griffin: What color are you proposing or has that come into the discussion at this stage?

Mr. Kott: Well given that this is Palo Alto we will likely have a lively controversy about the color. Portland, Oregon used blue and they have had good success, by the way, with increased safety, reduced crashes and increased use of the bike lane because of the tinting. That has really inspired a lot of people around the country. But there has been concern that the blue might be confusing to some people because as you know blue is our handicap parking indicator color. So there is discussion now nationally to make green the standard.

Chair Griffin: I would think a bright green something like drivers not wanting to drive on the grass. Anyway that sounds reasonable. Any other comments on this item? Next is number nine, which is selected improvements in the shuttle service, but trips and service routes along the corridor, etc. Phyllis.

Vice-Chair Cassel: Let me just make a comment here. We have at the Planning Commission level spent a lot of time working on shuttle buses and have been very much in support of it. It is mostly a funding issue and we know Gayle is working on that. I really didn’t want to get into that particular item tonight in general but to say that whenever we can work on a better shuttle system certainly I am delighted with that and I think other Commissioners have been. Note the nods Bonnie says.

Chair Griffin: Pat.

Commissioner Burt: Yes, just one of the speakers had advocated a school commute loop and I am hoping that we are also looking at extending it all the way down to the JCC.

Mr. Kott: Gayle Likens is our Transit Planning Specialist as well as our Bike Lane Planning Specialist and School Commute Planning Specialist. Gayle will be working with the school community to detail out a shuttle improvement program. The two facets of any kind of program
like that would be increased frequency and extended routing. So it would be some combination of that.

Chair Griffin: If there are no other questions or comments we would revert back to the first page and start working on the Arastradero items. That would mean item number three which is installation of lighted in-pavement pedestrian actuated crosswalks to enhance safety on Arastradero west of Georgia on Suzanne Drive, Clemo and near Mumford Place as well as Louise and Montrose. Questions or comments? Bonnie.

Commissioner Packer: My question would be where would this come in the phasing of this project? It sounds like this might be a little more expensive and more permanent of an installation. At what point would you propose doing this? I think it is a great idea. The safety is great.

Mr. Kott: It is probably most sensible to do it once the demonstration trial has proven successful and you get a permanent installation. We do have some concerns about making uncontrolled crosswalks. We have gone through this issue many times in Palo Alto. Uncontrolled crosswalks are really problematic when we have high approach speeds, as we have in this corridor, in four lanes. It is very difficult. If we slow car speeds down and do one lane crossing each direction for pedestrians, then the lighted crosswalk with a median refuge will give you a wonderful combination where you don’t have to worry about having stop control or signal control. All the factors are working for you. But when we don’t have that combination we begin to get really nervous and we would have to be real careful about doing an uncontrolled crosswalk with the three-lane configuration without the in-pavement lighting. We would do very bright signage, our neon signage, which has been successful in town, very clear pavement markings, which would probably be diagonal or zebra stripe crosswalk markings. We would have to be real careful about visibility. The in-pavement lighting is kind of icing on the cake and we are really optimistic about how successful that can be but it should come with the permanent installation I think.

Chair Griffin: Pat.

Commissioner Burt: Joe, I didn’t notice any reference to potential tinting or texturing of crosswalks. Is that also under consideration?

Mr. Kott: Very good question. El Camino Real for example, lots of questions about El Camino Real, we are very interested in doing some kind of colored or textured pavers for those crosswalks similar to what is suggested with the El Camino plan at, for example, Stanford and El Camino Real. We just think that visibility and the differentness of the pavement, it would have to be non-skid or skid resistant of course, but it we are just compelled by the safety benefits of visibility. We would like to do similar treatments in other places depending on cost constraints.

Chair Griffin: I have a question. Joe in the SR on page 14 where you are talking about the disadvantages of lighted crosswalks the last sentence you say, “Pedestrian actuated signals are effective for safety but do induce added vehicle delay and make traffic signal coordination on a street corridor more difficult.” I am thinking if the whole idea of this signal system is to permit the efficient utilization of a three lane street and then we put in a number, I think there were five or six, of these pedestrian actuated crosswalks won’t that disrupt our sophisticated signal system...
and particularly I am thinking during the commute period in the morning when children are
trying to go to school, trying to cross the corridor and that’s also when the commute traffic is at
its highest level? It seems like we are shooting ourselves in the foot there a bit.

Mr. Kott: I think that is a very good comment. I think what is likely to happen is that children
and pedestrians will bunch up at important school crossings under the protection or guidance of
traffic monitors or crossing guards and will wait for gaps. Cars do not come in continuous flows.
There are gaps. There is platooning in traffic and there will be those gaps and crossings will take
place then and the kids will tend to be bunched up during the gaps. There is no doubt that there
is some, if you will, efficiency drag and there will be some loss of the efficiency of the
optimization. We don’t think it will be a serious one. You know, I try to fairly portray all the
disadvantages but that doesn’t strike us as being a major one. We will still get most of the
efficiency of the traffic actuation even with interrupted flow through pedestrian crossings.

Chair Griffin: Then the next one is going to be number ten, still on Arastradero, and it is
provision of the three lane cross section. I guess I am not going to read that entire paragraph.
Are there questions or comments? This is probably the big one here. Bonnie.

Commissioner Packer: I don’t really have a question. I just want to express my support for the
concept in this area. I think we have heard from the public all the advantages. We have read in
the report all the advantages of having the three lanes instead of the four lanes. I don’t want to
have to reiterate them. I support it for all the reasons that are in the report.

Chair Griffin: Pat.

Commissioner Burt: I am also hopeful that we can achieve this. One of the speakers had raised
the issue of the Attachment D citation that 1,000 vehicles per hour per lane is a rule of thumb and
in our 2015 projections we are projecting numbers exceeding that. I guess I have two questions.
One is do the 2015 projections take into account any modal transfer basically people that we may
have fewer car trips as a result of the other enhancements that we are doing on the corridor?
Second, just in general what are your thoughts on the surface the contradiction between those
two references?

Mr. Kott: That is also a very good comment. No, those projections do not take into account
what we are actually hoping to achieve, that is the attainment of these performance measures as
stated in percentage increases in cycling, walking and public transit use, particularly our Shuttle
use. If you look at the Table, using 1,000 vehicle during peak hour, the numbers run from 20%
below that threshold to about 16% above. Applying the mitigations, achieving the performance
measures, we would be reasonably confident we would be under the 1,000 threshold. Now,
Christopher Thnay, our good colleague who used to work here, did this analysis for us and he
was very conservative. He didn’t put in the effects of the modal shift and that is what drew him
to the conclusion that the prudent course was to keep the four-lane cross-section, but we don’t
agree with Christopher’s conclusion. We think Palo Alto in particular can easily achieve those
performance measures, particularly with the success we have had for example at Terman.

Commissioner Burt: Well then I would just comment that I would encourage you to include that
reasoning and those assumptions in the report to make it clear to both the community and the
Council that that’s how you believe these numbers can be reconciled.
Chair Griffin: Karen.

Commissioner Holman: The only comment I will make is that I am pleased to see this come forward and happy that it sounds like most of the community is in support of it too. I will look forward to its trial.

Chair Griffin: No other questions or comments then item numbers eleven and twelve, eleven being the creation of a dedicated right turn lane at Gunn High School driveway as well as widening the driveway which is item number twelve. Any questions or comments on those two? Karen.

Commissioner Holman: Here is one where I am going to have to be convinced. Number eleven, a member of the public actually talked about how this would interrupt the bicycle lane and I wonder if Staff could comment on that?

Mr. Kott: A few comments and then I am sure Gayle will want to follow. The bicycle lane would be shifted to the left of this new right turn lane. Cyclists who wish to make a right turn at the Gunn driveway, just as cyclists who wish to make any kind of right turn, will need to become a vehicle. In fact they are a vehicle in making that right turn. So we would expect that to occur. Through bicyclists will simply shift over to the left of the new right turn lane. This is a pretty conventional approach. Gayle.

Ms. Likens: In addition, currently adjacent to the Gunn driveway there is a path that cyclists use to enter the campus and then they cross over the school driveway to get to the bike parking area on campus. So we would need to work with the school in redesigning the intersection to see exactly how those bicyclists would enter the campus. They could enter in the traffic lanes or they might want to get out of the traffic lane and onto that path. So we would work with them to design it most appropriately.

Commissioner Holman: How would pedestrians be accommodated then with this? I think that was a question that came up also.

Mr. Kott: I think there was a misunderstanding of the proposal. We would take what is called in some places the esplanade or the planting strip and use that five feet and combine it with some other width we are getting through restriping to make a right turn lane. That planting strip is just big rocks right now. There isn’t a blade of grass that I could see on it and I was just there yesterday. We are not taking any sidewalk. We are not moving the sidewalk. It remains. There was a question and a good one. Irwin Dawid is a fine environmentalist in town, a Sierra Club member and so forth. His concern that we would be putting pedestrians right by that right turn lane and there wouldn’t be a buffer. Even if it is just rock, its a buffer, and that is a point well taken, except it is a very short stretch of sidewalk. The benefits to the community of having much, much better efficiency at the driveway needs to be considered as a tradeoff.

Commissioner Holman: Just a quick follow up to that. Obviously you think it would be an improvement and that is why you are proposing it. The question I am asking though is is it really a long term solution and I know it is just a turn lane it is not a lane of traffic but would it do you
think by any chance have an effect of encouraging people to come because we are facilitating the automobile? Just could you respond to that?

Mr. Kott: Very good question. My own view is that the car is here to stay and so forth. I come from a family in which I would have a lot of unemployed relatives if the car ever vanished, since they build cars. It seems to me that we are going to make this corridor so much more hospitable to biking and walking and we will have even better shuttle transit use. We are likely to make a pretty big dent in the number of cars accessing the high school, at least for those Gunn kids who are not yet 16. I will kind of hold my opinion as to how big a dent we will make in the licensed driver population. We may be in pretty good shape overall with that right turn lane. We won’t have to worry too much about the length of it since it will be continuous flow. I expect a lot more alternative mode cycling and walking into Gunn and bus usage too in the future.

Chair Griffin: Bonnie.

Commissioner Packer: A couple of things on that. There is another alternative for westbound bicyclists heading toward Gunn. They can just turn right on Georgia and go into Gunn that way. There is a special entrance, a lovely redwood treed entrance, into Gunn. That is one possibility that they may choose to take. Another point is that Gunn is not only used by students there are a lot of activities that happen on that campus on the weekends and athletic activities so there are a lot of reasons to go to Gunn in the car. The question I have though on this part of the project is again a phasing question. Is this an item that could be implemented prior to the adaptive signal purchase?

Mr. Kott: The answer is yes of course we are very keen to proceed with that one most of all.

Chair Griffin: Karen, did you have a follow up?

Commissioner Holman: Yes. My comment about the bicyclists was not the ones necessarily going in just to Gunn but the ones going past that too. Maybe there is not very much bicycle traffic going past there.

Ms. Likens: The plan shows that we would continue the bike lane all the way through to Foothill Expressway because that is a direct commute route to the Research Park for employees and we do have a fair amount of commuter traffic, more commuter traffic than student traffic, right now in the corridor. The bike lane would continue but it would be shifted to the left, as Joe mentioned, of the right turn lane into Gunn. That is a very standard practice for designing bikeways. We actually have that configuration now at Miranda and Arastradero. That was a recently completed improvement project. So that would be the way that we would continue the bike lanes for those through bicyclists.

Mr. Kott: I should say that that shift means that they will just go straight on through. They won’t have to shift back because the new right turn lane is to the right of the through lane adjacent to it.

Chair Griffin: Phyllis.
Vice-Chair Cassel: There is an alternative proposal that keeps getting discussed about making the current lane a right hand turn lane for an hour but not only is that only doing it for an hour but there is an extensive amount of traffic that goes through there. If you have to make a right hand turn on Miranda or on Foothill and you have to get back into that right hand lane from the left hand lane, and I can assure you that is not easy in that amount time having done that many times. When you do this work with Gunn would you look at a way for people who are bringing their children and dropping them off if they can get into that right hand lane and find someplace in there to drop off and get back out. One of the problems in that people go through the intersection, stop on the other side of the intersection to let their kids out and then that interferes with the movement of that lane and stops it and backs it up into the intersection.

Mr. Kott: There are a lot of interrupted flows. It is very interesting about this four-lane stuff. Believe me it is not terribly efficient. It is kind of a myth and if you provide for the turning movements properly you don’t need as many through lanes except at the major intersections where you must have them just to store cars.

Chair Griffin: Any further comments or questions? Then we will move to item number six which is at the eastern end of Arastradero where the intersection with El Camino takes place and the removal of the two free right turn pork chop islands to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety. Any questions or comments on that item?

Vice-Chair Cassel: If you can do it without causing a backup on the right hand turn lane going north, you don’t have to comment on this, but if you do this carefully I think it will be much better for the crossing there. I am not sure we gain as much out of that as we think we do.

Mr. Kott: The advantage of taking them out of course is that the turns are slowed down so that the danger of motor vehicles going too fast and conflicting with bikes and pedestrians is greatly reduced. There is a big distance between that signal and the nearest upstream signal. We think the delay to motorists will be just very marginal and the benefit to cyclists and pedestrians will be major, it will be important.

Chair Griffin: Pat.

Commissioner Burt: Joe, are there are other alternatives to the removal of pork chops? They themselves and I guess perhaps traffic studies might refute my personal experience but when I think about them on El Camino and Embarcadero they are a pedestrian and bicycle refuge in themselves as you prepare to cross the next lanes. Are there ways to make the crossing to the pork chop safer through having that be some mechanism that would slow the cars turning right?

Mr. Kott: I suppose that could be done. We need to deflect the vehicles; you need to slow them down by deflecting them similar to the roundabout center median deflection that the Commissioners know about. But gosh, the approach speeds are very high on those turns. I don’t know what your experience has been Commissioner Burt. As regards mine as a pedestrian, is it is difficult. I can’t always be sure when I step out into the crosswalk between the pork chop island and the mainland that I might not encounter a turning vehicle real suddenly, similarly with the cyclists because cyclists have their blind spots too. Cars whip around and maybe coming at a cyclist’s blind spot, the driver may be distracted and so forth. So we are not very keen about
pork chop islands. There are some exceptions but in this case we think it is a pretty good call to
get rid of them.

Chair Griffin: I am going to interject here for a moment and ask Commissioners, you will notice
that it is basically 10:30 and we still have a third of these items left to go. We can do one of two
things we can keep grinding on this and get through it tonight. An alternative would be to
comeback tomorrow evening and finish up these last I think there are about seven items still to
go. I have one Commissioner who in fact would look forward to continuing the item until
tomorrow night. How do the rest of you feel? Bonnie.

Commissioner Packer: I think we are almost done.

Chair Griffin: Anyone else? And Pat? Okay, we will just keep right on going here then.

The next item would be moving to West Charleston. It is item number 13, retaining the existing
four travel lanes on Charleston from El Camino down to the railroad tracks and Alma street. Are
there any questions or comments on item 13? There being none we will go to 14, which is
provisions for a three lane cross section from Fabian back up westward to Alma Street. I won’t
read the rest of that paragraph. Questions or comments on that?

Commissioner Packer: Did you do 14?

Chair Griffin: I was on 14, yes.

Commissioner Packer: I just want to reiterate my support for the three lanes instead of the four
lanes for the same reasons I supported it on the West Charleston side. There was a concern
raised about the area between Fabian and Middlefield in the event the development on the Sun
site may impact that. But you know lanes are not that difficult to move back and forth and if that
creates a problem down the road that could probably be changed back.

Vice-Chair Cassel: Those numbers were already calculated into the calculations that said we
could do it.

Commissioner Packer: That’s true so that is why I am supporting the three lane all the way.

Chair Griffin: Any other comments? Then we move to number 15, which would be the four
travel lanes maintained at Middlefield, Alma, El Camino Real and Gunn High School. Any
comments on number 15?

Vice-Chair Cassel: That is an edit to the Staff Report that we have. It doesn’t say Gunn on the
Staff Report and it should be added.

Chair Griffin: Was that one of Joe’s edits earlier on? Yes, he says it was. If there are no
comments on that then we will move to 16 which is provision of a center left turn lane leading to
and just west of the easterly Hoover Elementary School driveway presupposing reversal of the
existing circulation from Charleston into and out of Hoover. Any questions or comments on 16?
Phyllis.
Vice-Chair Cassel: Yes, I have some questions and comments. They have to do with the fact that I drove through that today and the reason that they obviously changed the pattern was so that people could be dropped out on the right side in the back of the school and stay on the center where the school property is and not have to cross traffic. On the other hand there are extensive problems out on the street caused by not being able to make a left hand turn in there. Could you comment on the feasibility of actually reversing the traffic for the school?

Mr. Kott: I would like to add comments to mine too. We are presupposing this will be done. We have not had the kind of detailed back and forth with the Hoover School community that we need to engage in. We had a mobile workshop yesterday at Hoover School and some of their PTA people were there. We have Kathy Dirken who is with the School District, the Transportation Manager, on our stakeholders group. One interesting point about this drop off issue is that there are a lot of minivans now and mini-vans tend to have doors open on the right. In the first place it seemed to us that a left drop off is really no problem because you shouldn’t have young kids in the front seat anyway because of air bags and they will be getting off from the backseat. Well not so fast, there are mini vans. So we would really have to have drop-off on the right. We need to discuss details I think, but our thinking right now is we would create a couple of well-marked crosswalks that would channelize these kids. We would have a sidewalk on that other side, we would channelize the kids and there would have to be traffic wardens or crossing guards to help guide them. We would have slow car speeds circulation, maybe five miles an hour, people who are trying to get out. So that might be a good solution. We don’t have any sign-off from the Hoover School community yet though on that. That is a very important thing for us to get before we do the left turn lane because we need to have the reversal of circulation first.

Ms. Likens: I don’t really have anything to add other than we will be meeting with the school principal and the school administration with the representative on our advisory committee, the school bus manager, between now and when we go to the Council.

Vice-Chair Cassel: Joe, I am really familiar with this corner of the street. One time we were talking about a rotary at Nelson and I imagine that’s not making anyone too happy and it is expensive. The other alternative would be not to make a left hand turn there but let people make a U-turn at Nelson, which they can’t do now. There is no way to turn in the middle of the street. Would that be another alternative then everyone would be entering from the right?

Mr. Kott: Well, a couple of points. As this Commission knows, I don’t need talked into roundabouts, I think they are great and I am willing to say that. Roundabouts have many, many, many advantages. We think that they are very difficult to implement in Palo Alto. I will just leave it like that.

In terms of U-turning right there and inducing and encouraging a lot of U-turns we have a lot of kids crossing at that crosswalk at Nelson. We will have a lot of bicyclists and we will have many more of both bicyclists and kids crossing with these improvements. I would be real concerned about inducing a lot of U-turns in that situation. We are going to have cars U-turning and swinging into the bike lane and so forth. So I don’t myself think that is a good solution. I don’t know whether Gayle you have comments or Terry or Gary.
Chair Griffin: If there are no other comments on that we will move to 17, which is redesigning of the existing median at Louis and Montrose to retain it as a block to through movement as well as adding a widened pedestrian center median refuge. Any comments on number 17?

Commissioner Packer: I am looking forward to it.

Chair Griffin: Then we will finish up here with 18, which is the installation of the frontage improvements including the street trees and street lighting along the corridor. Any comments on 18?

I am hearing none so 19 would be the item on the demonstration trial of the corridor plan with paint, signage, asphalt curbing in selected sections prior to construction or deployment of the final improvements. Any comments or questions on that? Karen.

Commissioner Holman: Just one. Should there be some, even with all the expertise and all the work that has gone into this, should there be some fatal flaw let’s call it just for sake of conversation. It is a six-month trial but would it be possible rather than again to get debate going in the community to address a particular instance in the study rather than waiting the full six months so the situation might not get exacerbated?

Mr. Kott: I am not quite sure that I understand that question, Commissioner Holman. You mean individual elements rather than doing the whole demonstration trial?

Commissioner Holman: No I am saying doing the whole demonstration trial but then if there is, I am trying not to give an example either from another community or in our own community, but let’s say that there is a problem at the Young Life School. Would it be possible or is there any facility for addressing a problem there that might develop that is not anticipated even with all the work that has been done so that it doesn’t get to be a hot issue and jeopardize the rest of the program?

Mr. Kott: Yes, that is a good question. That is precisely why we want to do a trial. Whenever we do trials in Palo Alto of any kind of traffic measures, if safety problems occur then we correct them. So our prime directive is safety. If we need to close medians or open medians, whatever we have to do, to cure a safety problem. I would guess because we are inducing slower car speeds in between these intersections that we will likely not see safety concerns but we would definitely address them immediately if they occurred.

Commissioner Holman: Just for clarity, meaning that it is a six-month study so if two months down the road a real issue became identified it could be addressed at three months instead of waiting the six months.

Mr. Kott: In terms of a pressing safety issue, we would get out there and fix it ASAP. We would just get a contractor out or the Public Works Department and fix it. If it is more like perceptions or anxieties of fears that is something else again. Now Steve is very keen on, and I agree with him, a longer trial and he is probably right. We are thinking now of maybe a whole year. We will get the whole course of the seasons and that will give us a real good test.
Mr. Emslie: I wanted to emphasize one of the key factors in recommending any traffic improvement is we always test it and that is one of the three axioms that Joe mentioned, and we are incredibly dependent on the trial as a test so that we can flesh out issues that are unanticipated. So it is with this that we do proceed.

I wanted to make one clarifying comment. In item 19 it does say selected sections and I think because this is really a holistic approach that you can’t do segments and get a true read on the efficiencies that you would get. So we would want to make sure that item 19 is clear that we would test the whole corridor rather than selected sections. I think you would have the problem of not getting an accurate reflection of the efficiencies.

I do agree that I think that a longer than six month trial with a project of this level is most likely going to occur. Probably a 12-month would be appropriate in this case. Other cities that have done this type of trial have found that 12 months is the appropriate amount of time.

Chair Griffin: Phyllis.

Vice-Chair Cassel: Two things with the trial. One is 12 months is fine as long as every three months we are making corrections if we need to make corrections or something like that. The other is what if we get money to do part of it, a piece of it, out of one kind of funding? Can we then say well we have money for part of it we will do that trial? The goal is to do the whole thing at once but say we get bicycle money for that bicycle path that is coming down Bryant and then going down Middlefield so we can do a piece in the middle.

Mr. Emslie: It would really depend on what we were getting funding for. If it is for an improvement that didn’t relate directly to traffic flow, if it was a safety improvement that was not connected to promoting traffic flow then yes and we could do those types of things that wouldn’t interfere with that. But in terms of the lane reduction and transitions and all that you really have to do that as a corridor-wide test.

Chair Griffin: I am going to say that a 12-month trial certainly resonates with me based on some experience that I got here recently and also the ability to do some tweaking during the process is something I personally would encourage as well. I also am thinking about your comment about the holistic approach. I would like to see it all done or not. In other words, if we can’t do it right then let’s wait and keep the money in the savings account until we do have sufficient funding to do this thing properly particularly when the traffic signal system costs $1.3 million. That is quite a nut to crack. Are there any other comments on this or are we ready to do some wrap up conversation? Karen.

Commissioner Holman: I have a question that probably nobody wants to ask but needs to be asked I think. I think it is smart to do a 12-month trial and can Staff lay out for us then how this works? The reason we are doing this is because of projected development along the corridor. So how is this going to interface, and is this a question you want now or is it a question you want later? How then will this interface with how projects coming before us in the 12 months after this test is implemented how do we know if are achieving and when will we know if we are achieving the efficiencies that are anticipated and so how to use that in applying that logic to development proposals?
Mr. Kott: I'll let Steve handle the land use part of it because he knows everything about that and I don't know very much about it. I think what we are going to be learning is traffic operations lessons. As we have more traffic we will have more of the same. We want to make sure these turning movements are correct and make sure that the people are behaving themselves as vehicles in the bicycle lanes and answer all those kinds of questions. Steve, do you have any comments about land use implications?

Mr. Emslie: I would say that the trial is not going to inform us as to how accurate our growth projections are. That is something that we can't do. The trial will be more focused on as Joe mentioned fine tuning the operational aspects of that, how turning movements are made or are the proper radiuses in place, is the signage there, is the transition adequate, those kinds of things. How traffic operates in the corridor would be the issues that you would test during the trial. As far as how accurate we will have been in terms of our projections we have tried to be as conservative as we possibly can in modeling the outside of our development potential on the corridor and including those in. So we really do think we have projected a worst-case scenario for comfort that we have predicted the maximum amount of change in the corridor. So time will tell but the trial will not tell us how well we have done on our traffic predictions.

Commissioner Holman: I guess my question is a little bit different. It is not to ask you to try to commit to how accurate you have been on the growth projections but how we are trying to address the anticipated growth. So how far into a trial and is there a date projected given Council approval for this when we might see if the program is performing as anticipated?

Mr. Kott: We would take special note of the modal shift aspects beyond the traffic shift aspects. We would like to see some of these swallows as they arrive similar to Capistrano come to our corridor, bikes and pedestrian and more shuttle usage. That will be an important lesson. More development on this corridor will mean more traffic and we need to induce modal shift, we need to create some efficiencies with traffic adaptive and we will learn some important lessons. Steve is right though, in terms of the longer-term future we have done some pretty good projections but what actually gets developed out there is up the community.

Chair Griffin: Pat.

Commissioner Burt: I have faith that we won't have to swallow our words. I would just like to say in a wrap up before we lose any more folks I have been particularly impressed not only with the product the Staff has presented to us tonight but with the public participation process. I think it has been a very good model and both the quality of input from the public and the perseverance and in particular apparently the excellent work of the stakeholders group. I just wanted to say that before we lose anybody else tonight.

Chair Griffin: I am going to ask a question about whether we need to make a motion to approve this initial study.

Mr. Emslie: You would recommend the Council adopt the mitigated Negative Declaration in conjunction with the adoption of the plan.
Commissioner Holman: Don’t we also need to make a comment about the phasing? Do Commissioners feel and Staff feel like we have effectively or completely addressed the phasing aspect of this?

Chair Griffin: My take on it was that we had sufficiently ventilated that item unless you want to discuss it some more. I would be ready to entertain a motion. Bonnie.

MOTION

Commissioner Packer: It is a privilege to be able to make a motion on this project. So I will move that we recommend to the Council that they approve the plan that is before us with a one-year trial taking into account the comments that we have made tonight and that we recommend approval of the initial study Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration associated with the Charleston/ Arastradero Corridor Plan.

Chair Griffin: Do I have a second?

SECOND

Vice-Chair Cassel: Second.

Chair Griffin: Do you wish to speak to your motion, Bonnie?

Commissioner Packer: Yes, I will just repeat my congratulations to the Staff and to the community for working together to come with such a fine product. The beauty of it is that it is so simple in its concept. All the way through the corridor it is very eloquent. Moving lanes around doesn’t require a whole lot of construction that we have to deal with. I am looking forward to the new 21st Century technology in the traffic adaptive technology that the Council has already approved. I am looking forward to a beautiful street that we can enjoy traveling on. I am looking forward to people realizing that they can get from A to B without having to go terribly fast and enjoy the scenery as they are driving along at 25 miles an hour, stopping for pedestrians and bicyclists. And I am looking forward to the shift in mode more pedestrians and bicyclists going anywhere whether it is to school or heading off to the beautiful bike lane on Arastradero or wherever people are going. I won’t go on and on the hour is late and I will let other wax eloquently.

Chair Griffin: Phyllis, would you like to add any comments on your second?

Vice-Chair Cassel: Bonnie did all the eloquent waxing here. We haven’t said anything about the funding issues. In some way it is beyond us but it is in front of us. So my comment on that is of course it is going to be difficult to get funding. We are going to have to keep going after it and it may come in pieces and I think that may change our phasing but it would be nice if we could do it all at once. The other is that we didn’t mention directly the Negative Declaration in our conversations. I don’t know if anyone has any questions. This was very helpful to us. One of the problems with these declarations, these EIRs or mitigated negative declarations is they never say whooppee this takes out problems. It is either a significant change or a minor change or whatever and it always presumes that that’s negative but in fact in this it makes many comments
that there will be less impacts on a number of issues including aesthetics and a number of other problems. So I am pleased to second this motion.

Chair Griffin: Pat.

Commissioner Burt: On the issue of funding if I might briefly ask Joe any comments that he has on anticipated timeframe. I know when we were talking at a previous meeting about the Smart Signal concept we already had a first proposal in to the County I think and I just wanted to see if you could give us some sense of when you think funding might occur and the likelihood of it.

Mr. Kott: You need a crystal ball for this kind of thing but I think we have a very good shot at this County Roads and Local Streets program funding for traffic adaptive signalization. It is just the right time and the right place for it. We have had pretty good luck over the years getting other grant funds. As I mentioned with the Homer tunnel, it is a lot of work. Gayle actually is instrumental on all of our grant activities and deserves a lot of credit. I am hoping in a few years we will be ready to rock and roll and maybe sooner than that.

Mr. Emslie: Maybe just to clarify, the funding source that Joe is referring to is from the VTA, Valley Transportation Authority, and the initial funding phase, which we have already applied for, is for three-year funding. So the first allocations are going to be decided and given out in the first three years, no later. Then the program continues for another seven years for a total of ten years. So we should know fairly soon. Going through the process of allocating monies in three years is relatively quick and as the Commission knows this county has got a long history of support of its transportation infrastructure through outside sources. So there is a higher level of confidence that this will come through just because of the track record that this county has in supporting our transportation system.

Commissioner Burt: As a follow up to that what is the intended relationship between the trial period and its funding and implementation versus locking up funding for the permanent measures?

Mr. Kott: All the way through. As we do the trial we will be working like crazy to get money for the permanent. As I say we have been fairly successful over the years in getting money. If Council wants this as a top priority we will just work real hard to get the money.

Chair Griffin: Karen.

Mr. Emslie: One thing that is important and this comes up, the uncertainty of using grant funding, but I tell you project readiness, having a plan in place to move forward is absolutely essential for getting any kind of funding. One of the things that funding agencies want to know is that you are going to be able to use the money quickly. So having the plan in place is absolutely essential to being competitive. It does put us a little bit at risk and we are always out there trying to push it but it absolutely is essential to show that our project is ready to go and the money will be put to good use quickly. That is very, very important in making our competitive bid for this.

Chair Griffin: Karen.
Commissioner Holman: I just wanted to chime in with the other comments that have been made about congratulating the Staff and the members of the community who have also been working on this program. I think it is a good product and look forward to its implementation. I also wanted to mention one other thing which didn’t come up in our discussion tonight but the environmental benefits of this program also by reducing the amount of idling time for cars and getting people out of their cars and I think that is also something that ought to be mentioned and lauded. So thank you.

Chair Griffin: Phyllis.

Vice-Chair Cassel: I wanted to thank the neighborhood groups and others who came forward to speak. I know a lot of work has been done. One of the problems we run into with projects like this however is there are a lot of people who come forward who haven’t read the program, haven’t looked at the alternatives and it is going to take continuous education and help from all of those groups as they exist now in order to help other people understand why we say this might work or that might work. We would really appreciate that kind of support and continued help.

Chair Griffin: While I would say that I am fundamentally in favor of traffic calming schemes although based on some very recent experience I know these projects are not trouble-free. I hope that we are prepared for some pushback because there are a lot of people that are still focused on this counter-intuitive aspect. That being said I think it is a dandy program and I really hope that it works as well as it has been explained to us tonight. So are we ready to vote this up?

MOTION PASSED (5-0-1-0, Commissioner Bialson absent)

All those in favor of the motion say aye. (ayes) All opposed? There are none with Commissioner Bialson being absent.

Mr. Kott: Commissioners, thank you very much.

REPORTS FROM OFFICIALS.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES.

Chair Griffin: Now we come to the Commissioner Questions and Comments portion.

COMMISSION MEMBER QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, AND/OR ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Chair Griffin: I would like to ask for a volunteer for Planning Commissioner Rep with City Council for the month of February. Pat you are good man, thank you for that.

Now approval of minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES. Minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 29 and Regular Meeting of November 12, 2003.

Chair Griffin: We have two sets of minutes to vote on. One is for October the 29th. Do I have a motion for approval of October 29th minutes?