TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

DATE: FEBRUARY 9, 2004

CMR:140:04

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION APPROVING PROHIBITION OF PARKING BETWEEN 9:00 A.M. AND 10:00 A.M. ON SCHOOL DAYS ON SEGMENTS OF GEORGIA AVENUE, DONALD DRIVE AND HUBBARTT DRIVE

RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that Council adopt the attached resolution prohibiting parking between 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. on school days on segments of the 600 block of Georgia Avenue, 4100 block of Donald Drive and 4100 block of Hubbarrt Drive where temporary no parking signs are currently in place.

BACKGROUND
In November 2002, City staff, representatives of Gunn High School administration and PTA, and residents of the Greenacres II neighborhood began working to address the traffic safety and parking problems along Georgia Avenue related to Gunn High School commute traffic. Three areas of concern to the neighborhood were identified: student parking in the neighborhood, drop-off activity on Georgia Avenue near the path entrance to Gunn High, and unsafe driving behaviors in the neighborhood associated with Gunn High traffic.

Following a neighborhood meeting in November, the Neighborhood Traffic Working Group (NTWG) was formed to work directly with City staff and report back at the larger neighborhood-wide meetings.

In March 2003, at a second neighborhood meeting, residents agreed to a trial installation of ten “No Parking 9:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m. on School Days (Except Commercial Vehicles)” signs on Georgia Avenue between Donald Drive and Hubbarrt Avenue, to address the immediate parking and safety issues in the vicinity of the pathway entrance to Gunn High School. In April, after field observations by staff and the NTWG confirmed that the student parking had moved further into the neighborhood, the no parking zone was extended into the cul-de-sac on Georgia and to sections of Donald Drive and Hubbarrt Drive.
DISCUSSION
The results of the trial period for the no parking zones were presented at a neighborhood meeting in June 2003. The data showed that student parking problems had largely been eliminated on the street segments where the no parking signs were installed. Safety conditions along Georgia in the vicinity of the walkway to Gunn High caused by the confluence of traffic drop-off congestion and student parking have improved. The total number of students parking in the neighborhood decreased by over 50 percent, but the remaining student parking has moved to new sections of Georgia, Donald and Willmar.

In July 2003, staff conducted a formal survey of neighborhood residents to determine (1) the level of support for retaining the existing signs on Georgia, Hubbartt and Donald, and (2) the interest of residents of Willmar Drive, Wallis Court, Crosby Place, and additional segments of Georgia Avenue and Donald Drive with new student parking problems to have the signs extended to their blocks. The results of the survey with staff recommendations were reported to the residents in a letter in late September (Attachment B).

In summary, 62.5 percent of the residents of Georgia, Hubbarrt and Donald responded to the survey. A large majority (75 percent) of the respondents supported retaining the no parking signs. Based on this response, staff recommends that these signs be retained. The response rate for the other street segments surveyed was much lower and the responses more mixed. There is no majority consensus to extend the no parking zones to these additional street segments at this time.

Palo Alto Municipal Code Section 10.44.010 permits the City Manager to restrict parking for up to 4 months. California Vehicle Code (CVC) Section 22501 and PAMC Section 10.44.010 require Council to adopt a resolution making those restrictions permanent. Since the four-month period has lapsed, the current signs are longer of any force and effect unless duly established by resolution of the City Council.

The attached resolution formally adopts the existing parking restrictions on school days from 9:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m. on segments of the 600 block of Georgia Avenue, 4100 block of Donald Drive, and 4100 block of Hubbartt Drive.

City/School Liaison Committee
While the elimination of student parking along Georgia has opened up sight lines and reduced congestion during the morning commute period, Georgia Avenue in the vicinity of the gate to Gunn is still heavily used as a school drop-off area. This year, the path and gate are also being used by Terman Middle School students walking and biking to school, which has complicated the traffic patterns and potential points of conflict between vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians at the path entrance on Georgia Avenue.
This matter was discussed by the City/School Liaison Committee at its November and December meetings. Neighborhood residents addressed the Committee and requested joint City and PAUSD action to address continuing safety concerns. Subsequently, City and school district staff identified several actions based on the neighbors’ concerns: (1) the City installed “No Stopping” signs at the entrance to the Gunn path, to keep the area clear for pedestrians and cyclists, (2) the District removed the high bushes lining the path and replanted the area with low groundcover to improve sight lines, (3) the District agreed to evaluate the need for baffles along the path to slow bike traffic before entering Georgia Avenue, (4) the District agreed to have the principal of Gunn High send out a letter requesting that parents not use Georgia Avenue for drop-offs and informing them of the danger they pose to other student pedestrians and cyclists.

The Committee will receive an update from staff on the results of the new measures in February. However, staff reminded the Committee and neighbors that the long-term solution to the Georgia traffic issues is to improve the Charleston/Arastradero corridor, to make the commute to Gunn on Arastradero and the drop-off inside the school campus more convenient and attractive.

RESOURCE IMPACT
The cost of sign maintenance and enforcement will be absorbed by the Public Works and Police Departments, respectively.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS
This action is consistent with Comprehensive Plan Program T-47 “utilize engineering, enforcement, and educational tools to improve traffic safety on City roadways.”

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
Minor operational improvements are categorically exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines section 15301. No further environmental assessment is necessary.
ATTACHMENTS
A. Resolution Restricting Parking on Georgia, Hubbartt and Donald
B. September 30, 2003 Letter re results of resident survey
C. February 3, 2004 Letter to Residents

PREPARED BY: ____________________________
GAYLE LIKENS
Transportation Projects Manager

DEPARTMENT HEAD: ____________________________
STEVE ESMILIE
Director of Planning and Community Environment

CITY MANAGER APPROVAL: ____________________________
EMILY HARRISON
Assistant City Manager