TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL
FROM: CITY MANAGER
DEPARTMENT: PLANNING
AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT
DATE: DECEMBER 19, 2005
CMR: 460:05

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF A BUDGET AMENDMENT ORDINANCE IN THE AMOUNT OF $965,000 TO PROVIDE AN ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHARLESTON/ARASTRADERO CORRIDOR TRIAL AND THE GUNN HIGH SCHOOL DRIVEWAY/ARASTRADERO ROAD INTERSECTION AND ROADWAY MODIFICATIONS

RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that the Council:

1. Approve the use of $690,000 in funds from the Stanford Research Park Traffic Impact Fee for the traffic signal and roadway modifications at the Gunn High Driveway/Arastradero Road intersection as a capacity improvement to provide adequate alternative mitigation of impacts addressed in the Citywide Land Use and Transportation Study Draft Environmental Impact Report and the Environmental Impact Report for the 1998-2010 Comprehensive Plan, as allowed for under Section 16.45.060 (f) of the Palo Alto Municipal Code.

2. Approve the attached Budget Amendment Ordinance (BAO) in the amount of $965,000 to increase funding in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for the Charleston/Arastradero Corridor Project (CIP PL-5002) in 2005-2006 from $100,000 to $1,065,000 to fund the implementation of the Charleston/Arastradero Corridor Trial and Gunn High School Driveway/Arastradero intersection and roadway modifications during the summer of 2006. The project funding will come from reimbursements from the Stanford Research Park Traffic Impact Fee and the Charleston/Arastradero Corridor Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety Impact Fee.

3. Direct staff to send a letter to the Palo Alto Unified School District Board of Education transmitting the City Council’s action and requesting that the District relocate the 2006 summer school program tentatively scheduled for Gunn High School.

BACKGROUND
In January 2004, the City Council adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration and approved the Plan and Phasing Plan for the Charleston Arastradero Corridor Improvement Plan. The recommended phasing plan included the following:
1. Installation of a new dedicated westbound right turn lane on Arastradero at the Gunn High School driveway and associated driveway improvements.
2. Deployment of traffic adaptive signal technology along the entire corridor.
3. Demonstration of a three-lane section (two travel lanes, one in each direction) from west of Fabian to east of Foothill Expressway, retaining two travel lanes in each direction at both the east and west approaches of Middlefield, from the east approach to Alma to the west approach to El Camino Real, and at the east and west approaches to the Gunn High School driveway, and at the east approach to Foothill Expressway.
4. At the conclusion of the demonstration trial, make such permanent changes as proven to be desirable in the trial.
5. Installation of permanent frontage improvements, including street trees, median islands, and new street lighting, etc.

Since January 2004, staff has submitted 3 grant applications to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission for the Gunn High/Arastradero signal design and the trial implementation of the corridor plan, but none has been approved. In June 2005, during the adoption of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget for 2005/06, the Council requested that the Charleston/Arastradero Corridor Project be included in the 2005/06 CIP and directed that a placeholder of $100,000 be shown as seed funding for the project, but no funding source was identified. On September 26, 2005, the City Council adopted, by ordinance, the Charleston/Arastradero Corridor Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety Impact Fee which is expected to generate $819,000 in revenue over the next 10 years. The Gunn/Arastradero improvements are not included in the improvements to be funded by the fee as it is a capacity improvement.

This item was originally scheduled for the Council meeting of January 17, 2006, but is being brought forward tonight to accommodate the PAUSD deadline for making a decision on the location of the high school summer school program in 2006, which was scheduled to be held at Gunn High School.

The PAUSD Board of Education changed the high school summer school location to Palo Alto High School at its December 13th meeting.

**DISCUSSION**

Over the course of the last months, staff has been meeting to discuss how to move forward with the trial of the Charleston/Arastradero Corridor plan. These discussions have resulted in the following strategy to implement the Corridor Trial and permanent improvements to the Gunn High driveway/Arastradero intersection over the next 9 months:

**Corridor Trial Project:** Staff proposes that a “no frills” trial project be implemented consisting of the fundamental elements of the Corridor plan, including restriping to the new lane geometry, striped median islands, 3 new pedestrian crosswalks enhanced with in-pavement lighting, and necessary traffic signal modifications. This basic project would not include more costly elements such as continuous concrete or asphalt median islands, corner bulbouts, painted
pavement in the bike lanes or median landscaping. These elements would be deferred until a permanent project is approved and funding to implement the permanent project is available. In conjunction with the trial implementation, the Transportation Division will deploy traffic adaptive signal technology (Quicknet system) and countdown pedestrian signals at the signalized intersections along the corridor prior to the summer.

Public Works Engineering (PWE) has confirmed that a substantial section of the corridor, from Middlefield to Foothill Expressway has already been scheduled to be resurfaced next summer as part of the annual Street Maintenance CIP project (PE-86080). By implementing the Corridor Trial project concurrently, the majority of the restriping could be accomplished through the street maintenance project, without additional cost to the Charleston/Arastradero Corridor CIP project.

The total cost of the elements of the full Corridor Trial, which would need to be funded by the Charleston/Arastradero Corridor CIP Project, is $375,000. This cost includes resurfacing and restriping of the segment of the corridor on Charleston Road from Fabian to Middlefield and all of the traffic signal modifications and new enhanced pedestrian crosswalks along the entire corridor, other miscellaneous expenses, design services, and contingencies, all of which cannot be funded by the Street Maintenance project.

Gunn/Arastradero Intersection Improvements: This intersection modification is a stand-alone project that needs to be implemented as a permanent improvement prior to or concurrent with a trial of the lane reconfiguration elements of the Corridor Trial. It will require an accelerated timeline and commitment of staff resources to accomplish the necessary work to design and bid the work during the winter and spring and then implement the project during the 2 month period between the last day of school on June 15 and the start of school on August 21. To this end, in order to avoid undue delays to the project, Public Works Engineering will also design the Gunn High driveway and signal modification project in-house during the winter, in time for the project to be bid and constructed during the spring and summer.

Staff has advised the Palo Alto Unified School District of the potential for this project to move forward next summer and has requested that the District relocate the high school summer school from the Gunn High campus to avoid conflicts between the school commute and construction projects. Gunn High would normally host the summer school this year, since it has been at Palo Alto High for two consecutive years. The District has indicated that it must be assured by Council action on this matter before making a commitment to relocate the summer school, and that the decision is required by mid-December due to its deadline for printing and distributing the summer school packets to parents in early 2006.

The total cost of the Gunn High Intersection Project is estimated to be $690,000 including construction and contingencies.
A Budget Amendment Ordinance has been prepared requesting an increase in the appropriation for the Charleston/Arastradero Corridor Project CIP (Project PL-5002) to $1,065,000. A funding plan has been developed from two funding sources:

(1) **Charleston Arastradero Corridor Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety Impact Fee funds ($375,000)**

   On September 26, 2005 the City Council adopted, by ordinance, the Charleston/Arastradero Corridor Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety Impact Fee, which became effective on December 10, 2005. The fee is expected to generate approximately $819,000 over a 10-year period based on population and employment projections for the corridor. Fees are collected prior to issuance of a building permit. Staff estimates that fees totaling over $600,000 should be received during the next 2-3 years as a result of projects that are anticipated, including the Rickey’s Hyatt Development, 901 San Antonio and Alma Plaza. The likelihood of obtaining grant funding for the trial project is very limited, but if the trial is successful, there would be more opportunities for grant funding of other elements of the Corridor Plan, including permanent streetscape, bicycle and pedestrian enhancements. The remaining impact fee funds could be used as local match for federal, state or local grants.

(2) **Stanford Research Park Transportation Impact Fee ($690,000)**

   By Ordinance No. 3894 adopted on August 7, 1989, the City Council added Chapter 16.45 to the Palo Alto Municipal Code, establishing a fee on new developments in the Stanford Research Park/El Camino Real Service Commercial (CS) zone to fund certain intersection improvements to mitigate the impacts of ongoing development in the Stanford Research Park/El Camino Real CS Zone identified in the Citywide Land Use and Transportation Study Environmental Impact Report (Citywide EIR). The identified improvement list initially included eight intersections. The list of projects was modified and updated as part of the EIR for the 1998-2010 Comprehensive Plan in 1998.

   The ordinance contains provisions under section 16.46.050 (f) that the funds may be used for alternative improvements determined by the chief transportation official, subject to the City Council approval, if they provide adequate feasible mitigations. The segment of Arastradero Road adjacent to the school’s driveway presently has two lanes serving vehicular traffic in the westbound direction. One of the two lanes is designated for through movement, while the second lane is designated for the through movement in addition to the right-turn movement onto the school’s driveway. Queuing of vehicles waiting to turn into the school site combined with the large volume of through vehicles heading west reduces the roadway capacity and significantly impacts traffic operations in the westbound direction of Arastradero Road. The queuing of vehicles also impacts traffic operations at the nearby intersection of Foothill/Arastradero/Miranda, particularly in the westbound direction. The capacity improvement recommended at Gunn High contains the addition of an exclusive westbound right turn lane into the school driveway. The addition of this lane would leave two through lanes for the heavy flow of westbound traffic. This lane addition would improve the overall operational conditions on Arastradero Road near the Stanford
Research Park. It will also further enhance the effectiveness of the improvements made in 2004 at the nearby intersection of Foothill/Arastradero/Miranda (a distance of 700 feet away).

Therefore, staff has concluded that the Gunn High/Arastradero intersection improvements will improve operational conditions along the Arastradero Road corridor and will mitigate capacity impacts addressed in the Citywide Land Use and Transportation Study Draft Environmental Impact Report and the Environmental Impact Report for the 1998-2010 Comprehensive Plan for the intersection of Arastradero Road, Foothill Expressway, and Miranda Avenue, and therefore may be funded from the Stanford Research Park Impact Fee Fund, as provided in Chapter 16.45 of the Palo Alto Municipal Code.

**RESOURCE IMPACT**

The total cost of CIP Project PL-05002 is estimated to be $1,065,000. Of the total cost, $100,000 was appropriated in fiscal year 2005-06 Adopted Budget. Additional funding for the project in the amount of $690,000 is proposed to come from the Stanford Research Park Mitigation Impact Fee Reserve and from the Charleston/Arastradero Corridor Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety Impact Fee in the amount of $375,000.

Although $600,000 in fee revenues are estimated to be collected in the next two years, currently funding from the Charleston/Arastradero Corridor Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety Impact Fee is not available. Therefore, the Infrastructure Reserve will temporarily provide funding for the Corridor Trial portion of CIP PL-05002 and reimbursements will be made to the Infrastructure Reserve as revenues are received. It is anticipated that the Infrastructure Reserve will be fully reimbursed.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

This request does not represent a change to existing City policies. The recommendations are consistent with the Council-approved Charleston/Arastradero Corridor Improvement Plan. The trial implementation furthers Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan Goals, T-1, Less Reliance on Single Occupant Vehicles; T-3, Facilities, Services and Programs that Encourage and Promote Walking and Bicycling; T-5, a Transportation System that Minimizes Impacts on Residential Neighborhoods; and T-6, a High Level of Safety for Motorists, Pedestrians and Bicyclists on Palo Alto streets.

**TIMELINE**

The design work for the Corridor Trial and the Gunn/Arastradero intersection improvements will proceed immediately. Staff will bid the projects and award the contracts in Spring 2006. Construction work is expected to begin immediately after the school term ends in June and will be substantially completed by mid-August.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The City Council adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the Charleston/Arastradero Corridor Plan on January 20,
2004 (Resolution 8395). The plan includes mitigation that would reduce the identified environmental impacts to the less than significant level. The MND covered the implementation of the full Charleston/Arastradero Corridor project including the Trial and Gunn High School intersection improvements. The trial plan is a reduced level project that would not require further environmental review and is covered under the adopted MND and subject to the applicable performance measures and Mitigation Monitoring Program contained therein.

ATTACHMENTS
A. Budget Amendment Ordinance with the following Exhibits:
   a. Exhibit A: Stanford Research Park Traffic Mitigation Impact Fee Fund Reserve Balance
   b. Exhibit B: CIP PL-50002 Project Description

PREPARED BY: Gayle Likens, Acting Chief Transportation Official

DEPARTMENT HEAD: ________________________________

STEVE EMSLIE
Director of Planning and Community Environment

CITY MANAGER APPROVAL: ________________________________

EMILY HARRISON
Assistant City Manager

cc: Palo Alto Bicycle Advisory Committee
    City/School Traffic Safety Committee
    Charleston/Arastradero Corridor Plan Stakeholders Input Group
    Jerry Matranga, Palo Alto Unified School District
    Jean Snider, Stanford Management Company
    Palo Alto Planning and Transportation Commission