TO:          HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL
FROM:        CITY MANAGER                            DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT
DATE:        JULY 15, 2002                            CMR:343:02

SUBJECT:     APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING NO PARKING ZONES ON ALMA STREET NORTH OF LYTTON AVENUE, AND ON LYTTON AVENUE EAST OF ALMA STREET

RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that the Council adopt the attached resolution prohibiting parking along the: west side of Alma Street, north of Lytton Avenue, resulting in the removal of approximately eight parking spaces; and north side of Lytton Avenue, east of Alma Street, resulting in the removal of approximately four parking spaces.

BACKGROUND
At its February 5, 2001 meeting, the City Council voted 3-2 in favor of implementing a six-month trial of the "Recommended Preferred Option" traffic calming plan for Downtown North. As part of this plan, improvements at two intersections were identified as being necessary to handle the increased traffic flow resulting from traffic diverted out of the Downtown North neighborhood. One of these intersections was Alma Street/Lytton Avenue. The specific improvements included providing a dedicated right-turn lane on westbound Lytton at Alma, providing a dedicated left-turn lane on southbound Alma to eastbound Lytton, and performing the necessary traffic signal changes to provide a left-turn green arrow for this movement. It was staff’s recommendation that these improvements be implemented prior to installing the trial traffic calming plan in Downtown North. One reason that short-cutting occurs on Downtown North streets is because of delays along Lytton Avenue and its intersections with Alma Street and Middlefield Road. Any improvement along this route will incrementally lessen the advantage of cutting through the neighborhood. It is also important that the arterial improvements be implemented in time to handle additional through traffic that will be forced out of the neighborhood by the traffic calming plan.
DISCUSSION

Existing Conditions
Alma between Everett and Lytton has a single vehicle and bicycle lane in each direction, and on-street parking is permitted along both sides of the street, for most of the block. At the southbound approach to Lytton, the single southbound lane on Alma widens to two lanes. The left lane is used as a shared through and left-turn lane, and the right lane is used as a shared through and right-turn lane. No on-street parking exists along the west side of Alma within approximately 120 feet of the intersection.

Lytton between Alma and High has a single vehicle and bicycle lane in each direction, and on-street parking is allowed along both sides of the street. The single westbound lane accommodates left-turn, through and right-turn traffic at Alma; however, the far right-hand section of the roadway acts as a “sneaker” right-turn lane within approximately 30 feet of the intersection due to the existence of a driveway near the intersection which precludes on-street parking. Attachment A shows the existing striping near the intersection.

The primary land uses adjacent to the intersection include a Caltrain station and parking lot along the entire west side of Alma, and a Shell gas station at the northeast corner of the intersection. Also near the intersection are John F. Dahl Plumbing and Heating and a residential duplex along the east side of Alma north of the Shell station; and a restaurant along the north side of Lytton east of the Shell station.

Improvements
In order to accommodate an increase in southbound left-turn traffic from Alma to Lytton resulting from the Downtown North Traffic Calming Plan, the Council-approved plan included the recommendation that the southbound left lane on Alma at Lytton be converted to an exclusive left-turn lane, and the lane lengthened to 125 feet. As a result, southbound through traffic must be shifted to the right lane through a gradual transition that begins 150 upstream of the beginning of the left-turn lane. Because the parking lane will have to narrow over the length of this transition, on-street parking must be removed along the west side of Alma for this 150 feet. This translates into the loss of approximately eight on-street parking spaces. The southbound bicycle lane will not be affected.

In order to accommodate an increase in westbound right-turn traffic resulting from the Downtown North Traffic Calming Plan, the Council-approved plan included the recommendation that an exclusive right-turn lane be striped from Lytton onto Alma. By providing a dedicated right-turn lane, a greater number of vehicles can be accommodated than are currently accommodated by the “sneaker” lane. To make room for the exclusive right-turn lane, on-street parking must be removed for 160 feet along the north side of Lytton. Because two driveways currently exist within this section, this translates into the loss of only four on-street parking spaces. The westbound bicycle lane will not be affected.
Attachment B shows the proposed striping near the intersection, including the locations where on-street parking must be removed.

The arterial improvements were described in Attachment 6 of the October 11, 2000 report, Downtown North Neighborhood Traffic Calming Study, to the Planning and Transportation Commission. This description estimated the loss of four parking spaces on Alma and four on Lytton. The loss of parking was never highlighted in any later staff reports, nor was it discussed by the Commission or Council.

On October 4, 2001, an information packet was mailed to the property owners and managers of each of the properties that would be directly affected by the on-street parking removal. Attachment C lists the properties that were contacted. The packet included a letter describing the work to be done (Attachment D), and a diagram which showed the work schematically. A phone number was provided with the letter for concerned property owners/managers to contact the Transportation Division with specific concerns. To this date, no phone calls or letters have been received by the Transportation Division related to the on-street parking removal.

**RESOURCE IMPACT**

$190,000 has been allocated for implementing the Downtown North Traffic Calming Plan, including making improvements at the Alma/Lytton and Middlefield/Lytton intersections. Following Council approval of the resolution, staff will proceed to finalize plans for improvements at Alma/Lytton. Development of plans and bid documents for the Downtown North Traffic Calming Plan and improvements at Middlefield/Lytton will follow the Alma/Lytton improvements.

**ATTACHMENTS**

A. Existing intersection striping/configuration
B. Recommended intersection striping/configuration
C. List of Contacted Properties
D. Letter sent to impacted properties