TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER

DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC WORKS

DATE: MARCH 18, 2002

CMR:151:02

SUBJECT: DOWNTOWN PARKING STRUCTURES: CONSTRUCTION
PARKING MITIGATION MEASURES

REPORT IN BRIEF

The designs of two new downtown parking structures have been completed and are currently being advertised for construction bids. During construction a total of 152 parking spaces currently on Lot R and Lot S/L will be lost. This report is a plan for regaining those spaces by re-striping existing curbside parking and by the use of the former Palo Alto Medical Foundation parking lot.

In November 2001, Council set a goal of public parking spaces in the new garages at 40 to 60 percent. Since that time, the design of the garages has been developed to the point that more specific allocations can be determined. A confirmation of 42 percent public spaces is requested.
RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that Council:

1. Approve the attached Mitigation Monitoring Program.

2. After hearing public testimony, adopt the attached Resolution to authorize the addition of 34 on-street parking spaces at the specified downtown locations; to eliminate a mid-block crosswalk on Emerson Street in order to add on-street parking; to authorize angle parking in certain locations; and to designate public and permit parking in the two parking garages, with a parking mix of approximately 58% permit spaces/42% public spaces.

3. Approve use of the former Palo Alto Medical Foundation (PAMF) parking lot for permit parking and for Avenidas senior center staff and service vehicles during the construction period for the new garages. This recommendation could be revisited at a later point if staff is able to negotiate an agreement for early termination of the lease for the Webster/Cowper garage.

BACKGROUND
On June 4, 2001, Council approved consultant contracts that provided for the final design of two parking structures in the downtown area (CMR:263:01). The design of these garages was completed in February 2002, and is being advertised for construction bids. However, staff was directed to return to Council prior to construction with a plan outlining parking mitigation measures to replace the 189 parking spaces that will be lost during construction. There are 152 two-hour public spaces (115 in Lot S/L and 37 in Lot R) and 37 permit spaces in Lot R.

The Environmental Impact Report for this project identified a number of issues that need to be mitigated during the construction of the parking structures. The attached mitigation monitoring program (Attachment A) is required to fulfill the monitoring requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Staff was directed by Council on November 27, 2000 to explore the possibility of valet parking the Civic Center garage. Providing this service on one or more levels of the Civic Center parking garage could provide an additional 55 parking spaces.

Also, on November 27, 2000, Council approved a goal of designating forty (40) to sixty (60) percent of the new garage parking spaces as public parking (CMR:428:00). This goal was based on the approximate mix of public versus private parking at existing downtown parking lots and garages. Since that time, staff has worked with the Chamber of Commerce Parking Subcommittee to refine the details of that distribution. The results of that dialog are discussed herein.
DISCUSSION

Alternative Parking Sites during Construction

Effective this quarter, staff will sell no new permits in Lot R but will continue to renew permits for existing permit holders. This will serve to reduce the number of permit holders through attrition. At the time of construction on Lot R, those remaining permit holders will be moved to the Lot Q garage (on High Street, between Lytton and University Avenues). This will address the anticipated loss of 37 permit parking spaces.

In order to replace a portion of the 152 two-hour parking spaces that will be lost, staff recommends converting certain existing curbside parallel parking spaces to diagonal parking. Attachment B is the resolution that codifies these changes in accordance with the Municipal Code; Attachment C shows the plans for these changes. Although the anticipated spaces might need to be adjusted to accommodate field conditions, it is estimated that this would result in a gain of approximately 34 new parking spaces. These spaces would remain as two-hour parking spaces even after completion of the new garages. This will require eliminating a mid-block crosswalk on Emerson Street. Section 21950.5 of the California Vehicle Code requires the Council provide an opportunity for the public to provide input regarding the proposed elimination of a marked crosswalk, at least 30 days before it is eliminated. Notice of the right to provide input is required to be posted at the crosswalk, and has been done.

With the addition of 34 curbside two-hour parking spaces, the two-hour parking deficit during construction would be reduced to 118 spaces. Staff explored several options to gain these 118 spaces. Only one viable option was found, which involves use of the former Palo Alto Medical Foundation (PAMF) parking lot. The parking lot at the former PAMF site is now owned by the City and could be used during the year it will take to construct the Lot R garage. Given the uncertainty in obtaining spaces at other sites, staff recommends the use of this site for interim parking. Approximately 100 spaces are available, which, if used in conjunction with the 34 spaces gained by re-striping, would come closest to replacing the number of spaces lost by construction of the garages than the other options which were explored. The remaining deficit, even with the use of the PAMF lot, would be 18 spaces. Any use of the PAMF lot for temporary parking has no effect on the schedule to re-use the land for a park.

Staff recommends that parking on the former PAMF site be permit only, in order to reduce the volume of in-and-out traffic at the site. City staff who are currently parking at the Cowper/Webster garage could be moved to the former PAMF site, which would be a closer walk to the Civic Center and would also free up more desirable permit spaces at Cowper/Webster. People currently on a waiting list to receive Civic Center parking permits could also be offered permits at the former PAMF site. Since the PAMF parking lot is not in a high demand location, parking permits should be sold at the reduced rate used for other less desirable lots such as those near the train station.
Avenidas has also requested that its staff be allowed use of the PAMF lot if needed, since so many of its clients currently use Lot S, the site of the new Lot S/L garage. Allowing staff or service vehicles to park at the former PAMF lot would free up spaces at Lot C for senior visitors. Lot C, which is located behind Avenidas, has approximately 25 spaces (out of 54 total) reserved for use by Avenidas. Avenidas staff or service vehicles would be issued a dashboard pass and be allowed to park in the former PAMF lot at no cost.

Staff considered a number of other alternatives to use of the former PAMF lot, including:

- **Cowper-Webster Garage:** For over a year, staff has been in negotiations with Premier Properties and 529 Partners regarding an early termination of the Cowper-Webster lease. The two upper floors of the garage are currently not open to the public. These spaces could be used for public or permit parking and would offset the remaining 108-space parking deficit caused by construction of the new garages. An early termination of the lease could result in over 100 spaces that would revert to the City, while still maintaining a certain number of private spaces for the use of the tenants of 529 Partners. Closure on the negotiations has been difficult to achieve due to the current volatility of the commercial retail market, as the number of private spaces that 529 Partners wishes to retain is based upon the type of company interested in leasing adjacent commercial space. Given the uncertainty of this situation, it is recommended that additional spaces at the Cowper-Webster garage should not be planned as part of the parking mitigation plan for the new parking structures. If staff is able to reach an agreement with Premier Properties and 529 Partners in the future, however, it would then be possible to use any newly acquired parking spaces for mitigation of the construction deficit. Plans for new public spaces in the Cowper-Webster garage would be presented to Council for approval along with any new agreement relating to the Webster-Cowper lease. At that time, the use of the former PAMF lot for permit parking could be revisited, with any permit parking at the PAMF site moved into the newly available spaces at Cowper/Webster garage.

- **Valet Parking at the Civic Center:** Staff worked with the current parking vendor for Lot S, National Parking and Valet, to investigate the feasibility of valet parking at the Civic Center. National Parking recommended using the C level of the garage because it has a more open geometry for parking. The valet parking would result in an additional 55 parking spaces on the C level. Level A would still have short-term public parking, and the bulk of the permit parking would be moved to Level B. The cost for this valet service would be $22,000 per month. There would also be a one-time estimated cost of $15,000 to repaint and re-sign the parking levels as Level C permit parkers would need to be distributed to other levels. The cost to repaint and sign the garages could be paid by the Parking Assessment District, however, the cost of valet service would need to be paid by the General Fund, as any revenue generated returns to the City. Due to start-up and operational costs and the reduced demand for parking downtown, valet parking is not recommended at this time.
Other Parking Areas: Staff has investigated the possibility of leasing several private parking lots (Attachment D). In general, private property owners are not interested in entering a long-term lease with the City, particularly given liability issues that could arise with public use. Staff is currently investigating leasing the new Joint Powers Board (JPB) parking lot near Alma and Forest Avenue. Past queries to the JPB regarding its other lots indicated that it preferred to keep them exclusively for the use of commuters, particularly since non-commuting drivers already tend to use the JPB lot for inexpensive daily parking ($1 per day) for the downtown area.

Parking Distribution and Duration in New Structures
As stated in a previous staff report (CMR:428:00) on the subject of parking alternatives during construction, a number of factors are relevant when determining the mix of permit versus public parking. Those factors include:

- The need to keep at least as many public spaces as currently exist on the surface lots.
- The recommended goal of 40 to 60 percent public spaces is subject to design and/or enforcement constraints. For example, full bays, sections, or aisles would be assigned as either public or permit parking, as opposed to allowing a handful of permit parking on a floor otherwise filled with public parking.
- Any acquisition of the now-private floors of the Cowper/Webster garage would shift the allocations of permit and public parking in the new garages. The top two levels of the Cowper/Webster garage would likely be permit parking as it is not convenient to have public parking on the top floor.
- The ratio of public/permit parking in the new garages or other downtown parking garages or lots may be adjusted to accommodate the needs of any Residential Parking Permit program. Sufficient amounts of permit parking will be needed downtown in order to accommodate increased downtown parking demands resulting from nonresident parkers that would be displaced from residential neighborhoods.

All public parking spaces in the new garages would be two hour spaces. This will prevent people from using the public spaces as a way to circumvent the Color Zone parking. If the new garages had free parking for more than 2 hours, it would be possible to move one’s car from one color zone to the next throughout the day and not get a parking ticket or a parking permit. This is contrary to the objectives of the Color Zone system, a waste of productive time for downtown employees, and it would adversely affect the City’s permit revenues. The concept of having the public spaces in the new garages being limited to 2 hours has been approved by the Chamber of Commerce’s Parking Subcommittee.

The public spaces would be located on the most convenient levels. Staff recommends that the 83 spaces on the first and second level of the Lot R garage be public spaces and
that the remaining 130 spaces on the third, fourth, and fifth levels be permit parking. Staff also recommends that 296 spaces on the first, basement, and sub-basement levels of the Lot S/L garage be two-hour spaces and that the remaining 396 spaces on the second, third, fourth, and fifth levels be permit parking. This would provide approximately twice as many public spaces as presently exist on those lots. This would yield a proportion of 58% permit parking to 42% public parking, or approximately 60/40. This proportion is consistent with the proportion of parking spaces throughout the downtown parking assessment district lots.

**RESOURCE IMPACT**

It will cost approximately $20,000 to re-stripe the curbside parallel parking stalls in order to acquire 34 new diagonal parking spaces. This cost will be paid from the Downtown Parking Assessment District funding.

In order for the PAMF parking lot to be adequate for permit parking, the lights will need to be re-connected (they were disconnected during the demolition of the former PAMF building) and new stall striping and signage added. It will cost approximately $10,000 to reconnect the lights at the PAMF lot, add signage and other minor improvements. These costs would be paid from construction funds for the new parking structures.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

These recommendations are consistent with existing City policies.

**TIMELINE**

The final design of both garages is expected to be complete by February 2002. The construction documents could then be advertised for bids in late March 2002, with the construction contract awarded in April 2002. It will take approximately 1.5 years to complete construction of both garages.

2002
February Design completed. Construction bids solicited.

March Construction bids opened.

Publish and mail notices of second assessment payment to each property owner. Property owners have 30 days to pay cash for all or part of their confirmed assessment.

April Award construction contract

Council adopts Resolution Authorizing the Issuance of Limited Obligation Improvement Bonds. This resolution confirms unpaid assessments after the second cash payment, authorizes the second
series of bonds and approves the bond sale documents for the second series.

City issues second series of bonds to finance construction of garages and non-parking area

May

Construction begins

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
On December 20, 1999, the City Council adopted a resolution certifying the adequacy of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the parking structure project and made the required CEQA findings.

ATTACHMENTS
Attachment A: Mitigation Monitoring Program for the Downtown Parking Structures
Attachment B: Resolution for the creation of 34 additional on-street parking spaces
Attachment C: Curbside Parking Conversion – Parallel to Diagonal Parking Locations
Attachment D: Parking areas considered for lease during garage construction

PREPARED BY:____________________________________________________
KAREN BENGARD
Senior Engineer, Public Works

DEPARTMENT HEAD:______________________________________________
GLENN S. ROBERTS
Director of Public Works

CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:_______________________________________
EMILY HARRISON
Assistant City Manager

cc: Downtown Parking Committee, Chamber of Commerce