

RESOLUTION #08-46

A RESOLUTION OF THE ALBANY CITY COUNCIL AUTHORIZING AN ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW OF THE CLOSURE OF ALBANY STREETS ADJACENT TO THE SOUTHERN SIDE OF THE EL CERRITO PLAZA SHOPPING CENTER

WHEREAS, the El Cerrito Plaza Shopping Center initiated a redevelopment process around the year 2000, and a new mix of commercial tenants are now located at the Plaza, generating a significant increase in vehicular trips along Brighton Avenue and the four residential streets in Albany adjacent to the south side of El Cerrito Plaza (Kains, Cornell, Talbot and Evelyn); and

WHEREAS, it is uncharacteristic for public residential streets to be used as an entry into a privately owned commercial shopping center; and

WHEREAS, based on traffic data in the City of Albany Traffic Management Plan, there were approximately 300 vehicles on Brighton Avenue just east of San Pablo Avenue during the PM peak hour in 1997, and based on the Albany Street Closure Study conducted by Kimley-Horn in 2005, Brighton Avenue carried a volume of approximately 600 vehicles, representing a 100% increase in traffic volume since redevelopment of the El Cerrito Plaza Shopping Center and opening of the Albany Middle School; and

WHEREAS, based on traffic data collected in 2007 by Fehr & Peers for the Traffic Calming Study, the total traffic volume on the 400 block of Kains, Cornell, Talbot, and Evelyn Avenues combined (between Cerrito Creek and Brighton Avenue) is more than twice the volume on the 500 block (between Brighton Avenue and Garfield Street) of the same avenues during weekdays, and close to three times higher than the 400 block on Saturdays, which suggests that "cut-through" traffic use the neighborhood streets to enter and exit the Plaza; and

WHEREAS, based on year 2007 traffic data, weekday Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volumes on the residential streets north of Brighton Avenue and adjacent to the Plaza range from 1,290 to 2,110 vehicles, and Saturday ADT on these same streets range from 1,550 to 2,430 vehicles, negatively impacting the quality of life of the neighborhood streets in Albany adjacent to the Plaza; and

WHEREAS, the City of El Cerrito approved the development of a 128-unit residential development on the southeast portion of El Cerrito Plaza and the El Cerrito Plaza Mixed Use Development Project SEIR estimates that this project will generate a total of 824 daily vehicular trips, of which approximately 65% are projected to use residential streets in Albany according to the SEIR; and

WHEREAS, to the City's knowledge, no action has been taken to date by the El Cerrito Plaza Shopping Center to prepare a comprehensive traffic and circulation study for the entire El Cerrito Plaza that will provide improvements to traffic circulation, including a clearly delineated safe, effective and efficient path to San Pablo Avenue, and analyze truck movements and conflicts with auto traffic in the area adjacent to the Lucky's loading docks; and

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2 **WHEREAS**, the El Cerrito Plaza Shopping Center has failed to better utilize existing
entrances and exits off of San Pablo Avenue to maximize their efficiency; and

3 **WHEREAS**, the City of El Cerrito could allow additional development at the Plaza that
4 would further the negative effect of increased traffic volumes on Albany's residential streets
south side of the Plaza, and

5 **WHEREAS**, the Traffic and Safety Commission evaluated alternatives to closing all the
6 residential streets adjacent to the south side of the Plaza, such as implementing traffic calming
7 measures, or closing all streets except Kains Avenue; and

8 **WHEREAS**, based on the Traffic Calming Study prepared by Fehr and Peers in 2008, it
9 was determined that traffic calming measures would not be effective in significantly decreasing
the volume of traffic on the residential streets south of the Plaza; and

10 **WHEREAS**, based on the Albany Street Closure Study conducted by Kimley-Horn in
11 2005, it was found that closing all streets except Kains Avenue would increase the volumes on
Kains Avenue by approximately 200 percent; and

12 **WHEREAS**, in 1999, the City of Albany agreed to implement a request by the City of El
13 Cerrito to close Spokane Avenue to prevent vehicle access to the newly opened Albany Middle
School through El Cerrito, due to El Cerrito's concerns about traffic negatively impacting the
14 quality of life of El Cerrito residents on Behrens Avenue; and

15 **WHEREAS**, closing all the streets in Albany would definitely decrease traffic volumes
16 on the residential streets adjacent to the south side of El Cerrito Plaza, improve the quality of life
of residents on these streets, and thereby reduce the exposure of children on those streets to
excessive vehicular and truck traffic; and

17 **WHEREAS**, closing all the streets would require an amendment to the Albany General
18 Plan; and

19 **WHEREAS**, an environmental review should include studying any factors related to
20 General Plan amendments that would be appropriate to adopt as part of a road closure project,
should one be approved by the City Council.

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22 **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:**

23 That the City Council, at its July 7, 2008 meeting authorized the City Administrator to proceed
24 with the environmental review on closing all the streets adjacent to El Cerrito Plaza for the
reasons stated above, and including in that environmental study any matters related to adopting
amendments to the General Plan as may be appropriate in conjunction with a road closure project.

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Robert S. Lieber, Mayor