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Residents pleased by traffic plan for area next to Capitola Mall

CAPITOLA — A traffic circulation plan for the Deanes Lane area next to Capitola Mall — a plan that appeared to please most of the area's residents — was approved by the City Council Thursday night.

While council members agreed that Deanes Lane can be completed, they assured no development will occur in the area. They placed a building moratorium, of sorts, for the vacant area around Deanes Lane. They said development would not be allowed until mall traffic problems are solved. Specifically, a long-planned Clares Street Loop around the mall will have to be built before development can occur.

The plan will prevent new traffic from clogging existing neighborhoods on Gross Road, 40th Avenue, Lotman Drive and Sommerfield Avenue from new traffic.

Existing barriers on both 40th and Lotman will remain up, preventing mall traffic from using neighborhood streets as a short cut.

Deanes Lane will be connected to Clares Street, but not to Gross Road. A cul-de-sac will be built on the west end of Deanes Lane near Gross Road to prevent through traffic.

The prerequisite to future Deanes Lane development — the Clares Street Loop — puts on hold a 90-unit, three-story senior citizen apartment complex proposed for the south side of Deanes Lane. It was that proposal that prompted several Deanes Lane

property owners to request annexation to the city.

Council members faced the task of trying to come up with a plan for an area not even within city boundaries. The area — bounded by Clares Street, Gross Road and 40th Avenue — takes in 13 acres behind the Burger King restaurant near the mall. It is presently in the unincorporated portion of the county.

The traffic circulation plan was a requirement by the Local Agency Formation Commission before an annexation could occur.

The adopted plan accedes to the

wishes as stated by 240 residents in the area, who signed a petition. Specifically, residents called for existing barriers to remain up and that no commercial traffic be allowed in existing single-family neighborhoods.

Lotman Drive resident Jack Jayet was among the most outspoken of the 12 residents marching to the podium during the 1½-hour public hearing. He decried the loss of safety, as well as detriment to the health and welfare of residents if commercial traffic were allowed to use their neighborhoods as a short cut.