



CITY OF SACRAMENTO

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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ENGINEERING DIVISION

THOMAS M. FINLEY
Engineering Division Manager

March 13, 1986

Transportation and Community Development Committee
Sacramento, California

Honorable Members In Session:

SUBJECT: Final EIR Determination and Certification and Route Adoption -
Arden-Garden Connector Study (C.C. 9671)

SUMMARY

The EIR evaluates the impacts of the three most feasible east-west roadway connections linking the Arden Way area to Garden Highway near Northgate Boulevard for the proposed Arden-Garden Connector. The selection of the route is the first of a series of steps necessary before construction of this connector can be initiated. Three alternative routes were analyzed in the EIR, in addition to a no-project alternative. The City Council included the proposed Arden-Garden Connector as a mitigation measure for the 1982 office rezoning in the South Natomas area. The 1984 North Sacramento Community Plan included an east-west (Arden-Garden Connector) street improvement. The South Natomas Community Plan adopted on January 28, 1986 also included an east-west (Arden-Garden Connector) street improvement.

The EIR provides information that one alternative by itself cannot accommodate future traffic. Consequently Public Works staff recommends an area-wide street network system which would include Alternative 1 and Alternative 3.

The Transportation and Community Development Committee is commenting in an advisory capacity to the City Council on this matter. The staff recommends that this Committee approve and forward this report to the City Council with the following recommendations:

1. Determine that the Final EIR is adequate.
2. Certify that the EIR has been prepared in compliance with State CEQA Guidelines and that the City Council has considered the information contained in the EIR.

3. Determine that the project's potential significant impacts have been mitigated, where feasible, to less than a significant level by including mitigation measures identified in the Final EIR and in this report into the project; and that other potential significant impacts are acceptable because mitigation measures have been developed in order to reduce these impacts to the extent feasible; and on balancing the benefits to be realized by adopting the Alternative 1 and elements of Alternative 3 of the Arden-Garden Connector Study against the remaining environmental risks, certain economic, social and other considerations as identified outweigh the impacts and support of the Arden-Garden Connector.
4. Amend the Major Street element of the City General Plan to include Alternative 1, Arden Way to Garden Highway via East Levee Road and elements of Alternative 3, Exposition Blvd. to Route 160 including all weather Northgate Blvd from Route 160 to Garden Highway.
5. City staff be directed to proceed with preliminary design and prepare necessary NEPA environmental work required to obtain Federal Aid Urban funding for Alternative 1.
6. City staff be directed to work with the private sector to develop private and/or public financing of Alternative 3.

BACKGROUND

Growth and development in the South Natomas, North Sacramento, Arden Fair and Point West areas have generated a need for an east-west connector between these areas. The three existing crossings of the Natomas East Main Drainage Canal at El Camino Avenue, Silver Eagle Road, and Main Avenue do not provide enough traffic capacity to carry projected traffic volumes between these areas.

Staff has conducted eleven public meetings and workshops at various stages of the study to receive public input. A public hearing on the Draft EIR was held on December 11, 1985. The Planning Commission reviewed the Draft EIR on December 5, 1985. The T & C D Committee reviewed the Draft EIR on January 21, 1986. Approximately 20 alternatives were screened down to three alternatives in addition to a No Project Alternative.

Alternative 1 would extend Garden Highway on top of the levee east along East Levee Road to a point near Columbus Avenue. Here, the route would cross the Natomas East Main Drainage Canal and the Union Pacific Railroad tracks on a bridge structure that would meet the extension of Arden Way on the east side of the canal. The cost of construction of Alternative 1 is estimated to be \$10.6 million.

Alternative 2 would provide the most direct connection of Garden Highway to Arden Way via Jefferson Avenue. It would extend Garden Highway east from Northgate Boulevard along Jefferson Avenue to the west levee of the Natomas East Main Drainage Canal. From here, similar to Alternative 1, the route would cross the drainage canal and the railroad tracks on a bridge structure that would meet the extension of Arden Way on the east side of the canal. Cost of construction of Alternate 2 is estimated to be \$8.6 million.

Alternative 3 would extend Exposition Boulevard westward under the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks to a new interchange with Highway 160 at Canterbury Road. The route would continue along Highway 160 to a new interchange at Northgate Boulevard. The route would then proceed north on Northgate Boulevard on a causeway structure to Garden Highway. This alternative would bypass the existing North Sacramento business area and would do little to lessen traffic on El Camino Ave. Cost of construction of Alternative 3 is estimated to be \$15.1 million.

Environmental Impacts

The summary below outlines the significant adverse environmental impacts of Alternatives based on the Draft and Final EIR and public comments.

Alternative 1:

1. Land Use: Acquisition required of a portion of 14 parcels and all of five parcels on Columbus Avenue. There may be the displacement of up to four residential dwellings. The City would negotiate and compensate at fair market value for required right-of-way and relocation to reduce this impact to a less than significant level. During final design stage the final alignment of the bridge and the possible use of retaining walls to reduce the fill area may avoid the displacement of one or two of the residential dwellings.
2. Traffic and Transportation: Increased volume-to-capacity ratios at the Garden Highway/Northgate Boulevard and Del Paso Boulevard/Arden Way intersections and on the eastern segment of Arden way to unacceptable levels (Level E/F). These high levels of congestion are attributed to general development of the area, which is expected to increase travel to areas south and east of South Natomas. The overall congestion in the area would be worse without the alternative. The mitigation measure would be to adopt Alternative 1 and Alternative 3. This would provide several routes between each origin and destination, and reduce traffic on each individual route.

3. Noise: Sensitive noise receptors affected by Alternative 1 are Our Lady of Fatima School (62.6 to 64.2dB CNEL, an 11.7% increase in loudness) and the North Sacramento Branch Library (65.0 to 68.7dB CNEL a 29% increase in loudness). Possible mitigation is to conduct interior noise surveys of the structures and provide noise insulation improvements to significantly affected structures. The most significant noise impact of Alternative 1 would be in the Gardenland Area. The noise levels on the properties on either side of Columbus Avenue would be in excess of 65dB. Some properties between Columbus Avenue and the East Levee Road would be exposed to noise levels above 70.0 dB CNEL. The only feasible way to reduce the noise to acceptable levels is by the construction of a sound wall on the levee. The State of California Reclamation District Number 1000 Board, which has jurisdiction of the levee, will not allow a sound wall to be constructed on the levee. It is the policy of the State Reclamation Board that nothing can be built within 10 feet of the toe of the levee which would obstruct the visual inspection of the levee and would limit access to the levee for flood control purposes. In discussions with the Reclamation Board's staff, they were adamant against the construction of a sound wall on the levee.

A sound wall constructed 10 feet from the toe of the levee would have to be a minimum of 26 feet high to effectively reduce the noise. A 26 foot high sound wall not only would be extremely costly (\$500,000 +/-) but it would also constitute an adverse visual and aesthetic impact to the area.

Due to the requirements of the State Reclamation Board which prohibit unauthorized encroachments within the levee and the infeasibility of constructing a 26 foot high sound wall ten feet from the toe of the levee, it is the recommendation of staff that a sound wall not be constructed. The noise impact to the Gardenland area cannot be mitigated to a less than significant level.

It is the recommendation of staff that a study to determine feasible noise insulation improvements to the school and library be conducted and implemented to reduce the noise impact to less than significant level.

4. Water Quality: Potential for water quality impacts in the Natomas East Main Drainage Canal are primarily from construction related activities. Precautionary measures during construction will be implemented to limit water quality degradation to a less than significant level.

5. Fisheries: Potential for exposing fish in the Natomas East Main Drainage Canal to pollutants and blockage of fish migration. Construction activities will be scheduled and designed to minimize impacts on fish. Mitigation will reduce this impact to a less than significant level.
6. Botany and Wildlife Resources: Potential loss of 2.75 +/- acres of valley bottom land vegetation in Northgate Triangle, potential loss or damage to two potential heritage trees, and potential loss of 8.0 acres of wildlife habitat for the valley elderberry longhorn beetle, a federally designated endangered species. The owners of the land have negotiated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and have transplanted the first of two groups of the elderberry bushes. Loss of vegetation and habitat is no longer an issue. Trees will be protected during construction. If it becomes necessary to remove any trees then additional trees will be planted to reduce this impact to a less than significant level.
7. Public Services and Facilities: Potential crossing of a high pressure gas feeder east of the East Levee Road/Northgate Boulevard intersection. During design phases coordination with PG&E will be conducted to avoid gas mains. Extensive modification will be required to the existing flood control levee. Preliminary roadway designs will be submitted to the State Reclamation Board for review and approval.
8. Visual Resources: Change in the visual character of the East Levee Road on Columbus Avenue residences; change in distant views from the American River parkway caused by the visual intrusion of the proposed bridge; and change in the views from the Jedediah Smith Bike Trail and from the Arden Way residences. Mitigation measures are to revegetate the north facing slope and the northerly and southerly edge of that portion of connector located on the Natomas East Main Drainage Canal levee; design the bridge crossing over the Natomas East Main Drainage Canal to minimize potential visual impacts; and provide a landscaped buffer along the west Arden Way improvements that front residential uses. These mitigation measures will reduce potential visual impacts to a less than significant level.

Alternative 2:

1. Land Use: Would require the acquisition of a portion of 12 parcels and all of 12 additional parcels on Jefferson Avenue as well as the displacement of 15 residences and 2 commercial establishments. The City would negotiate and compensate at fair market value for required right-of-way and relocation to reduce this impact to a less than significant level. Alternative 2 would sever the Gardenland neighborhood and would disrupt the residential character of Jefferson Avenue. There are no measures that would mitigate these impacts.
2. Traffic and Transportation: Increased volume-to-capacity ratios at the Garden Highway/Northgate Boulevard and Del Paso Boulevard/Arden Way intersections and on the eastern segment of Arden Way to unacceptable levels (Level E/F). These high levels of congestion are attributed to the general development of the area, which is expected to increase travel to areas south and east of South Natomas. Overall congestion in the area would be worse without the alternative. The mitigation measure would be to adopt Alternative 3 also. This would provide several routes between each origin and destination, and reduce traffic on each individual route. Major disruption caused to access and local circulation on Jefferson Avenue could not be mitigated to less than significant levels.
3. Noise: Noise impacts and mitigation measures on Our Lady of Fatima School and North Sacramento Library are the same as Alternative 1. Noise levels would increase on Jefferson Avenue, between 41.0 and 100.0 percent. Noise levels would exceed 65.0 dB CNEL along both sides of Jefferson Avenue. There is no feasible mitigation measure to reduce noise impacts to less than significant levels on Jefferson Avenue. Some structures may be exposed to interior noise levels above 45dB CNEL, even if insulation of structures is provided. Sound walls will not mitigate the noise due to required openings in the wall for driveways.
4. Water Quality and Fisheries: Impacts and mitigation measures same as Alternative 1.
5. Botanical and Wildlife Resources: Impacts and mitigation measures same as Alternative 1.
6. Public Services and Facilities: Alternative 2 may require the removal of Water Well No. 151. Mitigation would be to relocate the water well or increase pumping of other wells to reduce this impact to less than significant levels.

7. Visual Resources: Impacts include change in the visual character of Jefferson Avenue residential area; change in distant views from the American River Parkway caused by visual intrusion of proposed bridge; change in views from Jedediah Smith Bike Trail and Arden Way residences. Mitigation measures are to provide a landscaped buffer along Jefferson Avenue; design the bridge crossing over the Natomas East Main Drainage Canal to minimize potential visual impacts; and provide a landscaped buffer along the west Arden Way improvements that front residential uses. These mitigation measures will reduce visual impacts to less than significant levels.

Alternative 3:

1. Land Use: Since the distribution of the draft EIR the all-weather Northgate causeway has been recognized as a part of the American River Parkway Plan. It may still be inconsistent with Federal flood plain management regulations and parkland preservation regulations. This may make it difficult to obtain Federal funding for Alternative 3. Federal Highway Administration and other agencies would be contacted to ensure compliance to federal regulations.
2. Traffic and Transportation: North Sacramento Land Development Company is concerned with the location of the portion of Alternative 3 (Exposition Boulevard to Route 160) which passes through their properties South of Route 160 behind the Woodlake Inn. The alignment of the connection of Exposition Boulevard to Route 160 as shown on Alternative 3 is only conceptual at this time, and was used as a means to analyze the environmental impacts of a connection. The final alignment of the connection of Exposition Boulevard to Route 160 will require preliminary design engineering in coordination with Cal Trans and property owners.
3. Water Quality and Fisheries: Impacts and mitigation measures same as Alternative 1.
4. Botanical and Wildlife Resources: Potentially there will be a loss of 2.3 +/- acres of valley bottomland vegetation and elderberry longhorn beetle habitat on the east side of Northgate Boulevard between Garden Highway and Route 160. The mitigation would be the acquisition of 2.3 +/- acres of valley elderberry longhorn beetle habitat and transplant the elderberry bushes. This would reduce this impact to a less than significant level.

5. Public Services and Facilities: Potentially there may be conflicts with the crossings with a Sacramento County Regional Sanitation District 72 inch interceptor and a PG&E high pressure gas main. During design phases Sacramento County Regional Sanitation District and PG&E will be contacted to avoid conflicts.
6. Visual Resources: There will be a visual intrusion in the American River Parkway caused by an elevated Northgate Boulevard Causeway. There is no mitigation.

Noise impacts of Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 cannot be mitigated to a less than significant level. A sound wall is not feasible for mitigation on Alternative 1 due to the State Reclamation Board's policy regarding levee encroachments. A sound wall is not feasible for Alternative 2 due to required openings in wall for driveways. Of the two alternatives, Alternative 1 has a lesser noise impact than Alternative 2 because of the location of the route. Alternative 1 is along the edge of a residential area. Alternative 2 is on Jefferson Avenue which is in the middle of a residential area. Alternative 3 does not have a significant noise impact but this alternative does not meet the goals of a direct east-west connector. It would bypass the existing North Sacramento business area and would do little to lessen traffic on El Camino Avenue.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

The EIR provides information that any one alternative by itself cannot accommodate all the future traffic. Public Works staff therefore recommends an area wide street network system which would include Alternative 1 and Alternative 3 to provide for the circulation needs of the general area.

FINANCIAL

There are no financial implications at this present time.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Transportation and Community Development Committee recommend to the City Council the following:

1. Determine that the Final EIR is adequate.
2. Certify that the EIR has been prepared in compliance with State CEQA Guidelines and that the City Council has considered the information contained in the EIR.

3. Determine that the project's potential significant impacts have been mitigated, where feasible to a less than significant level by including mitigation measures identified in the Final EIR and in this report into the project; and that other potential significant impacts are acceptable because mitigation measures have been developed in order to reduce these impacts to the extent feasible; and, on balancing the benefits to be realized by adopting Alternative 1 and elements of Alternative 3 of the Arden-Garden Connector Study against the remaining environmental risks, certain economic, social and other considerations as identified outweigh the impacts and support of the Arden-Garden Connector.
4. Amend the Major Street element of City General Plan to include Alternative 1, Arden Way to Garden Highway via East Levee Road and elements of Alternative 3, Exposition Blvd. to Route 160 including all weather Northgate Blvd from Route 160 to Garden Highway.
5. City staff be directed to proceed with preliminary design and prepare necessary NEPA environmental work required to obtain Federal Aid Urban funding for Alternative 1.
6. City staff directed to work with the private sector to develop private and/or public financing of Alternative 3.

Respectfully submitted,



THOMAS M. FINLEY
Engineering Division Manager

Recommendation Approved:



FOR

SOLON WISHAM, JR.
Assistant City Manager

Approved:

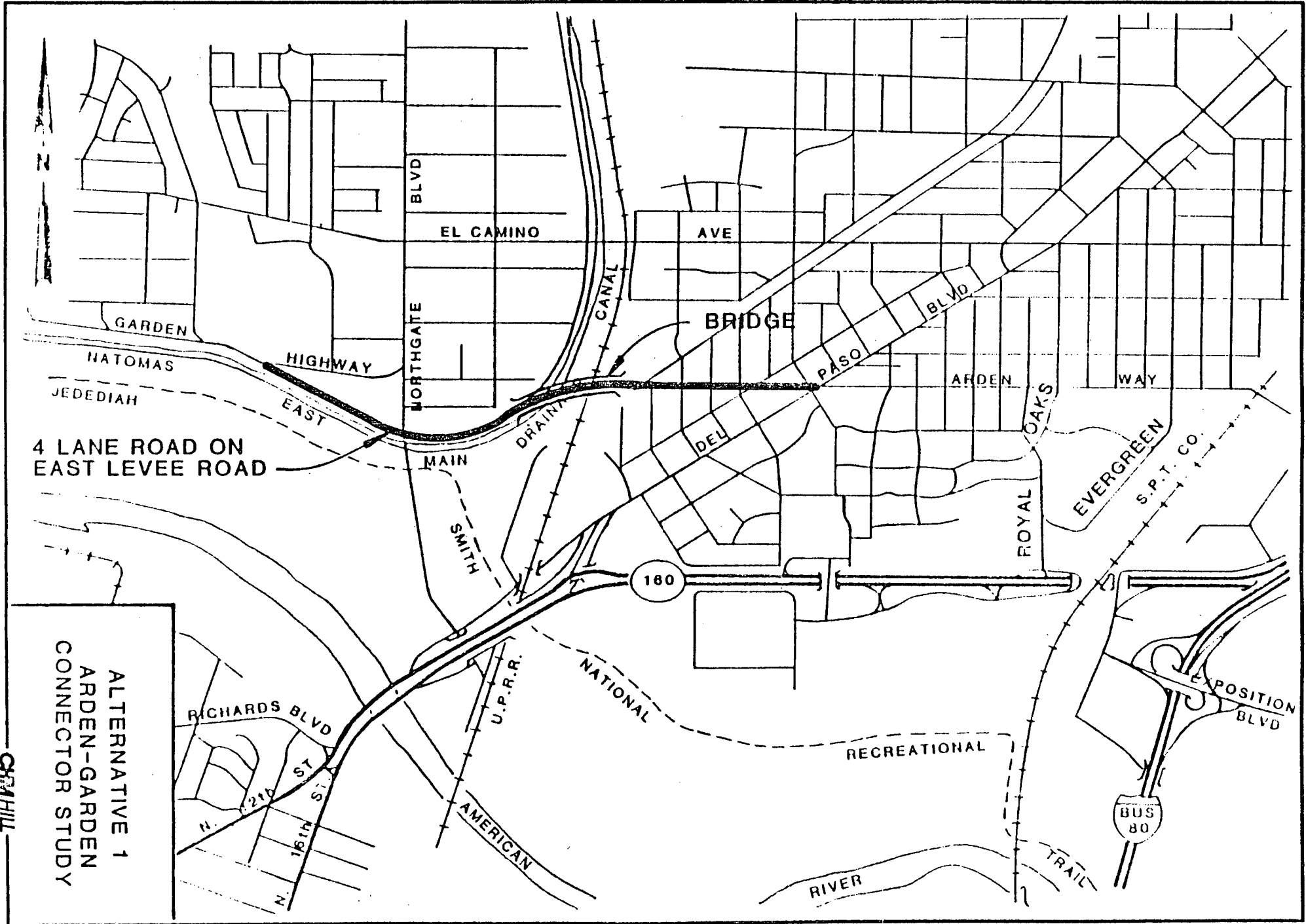


MELVIN H. JOHNSON
Director of Public Works

KY:eh
KY-25012

March 25, 1986
District Nos. 1, 2 and 3

Attachment

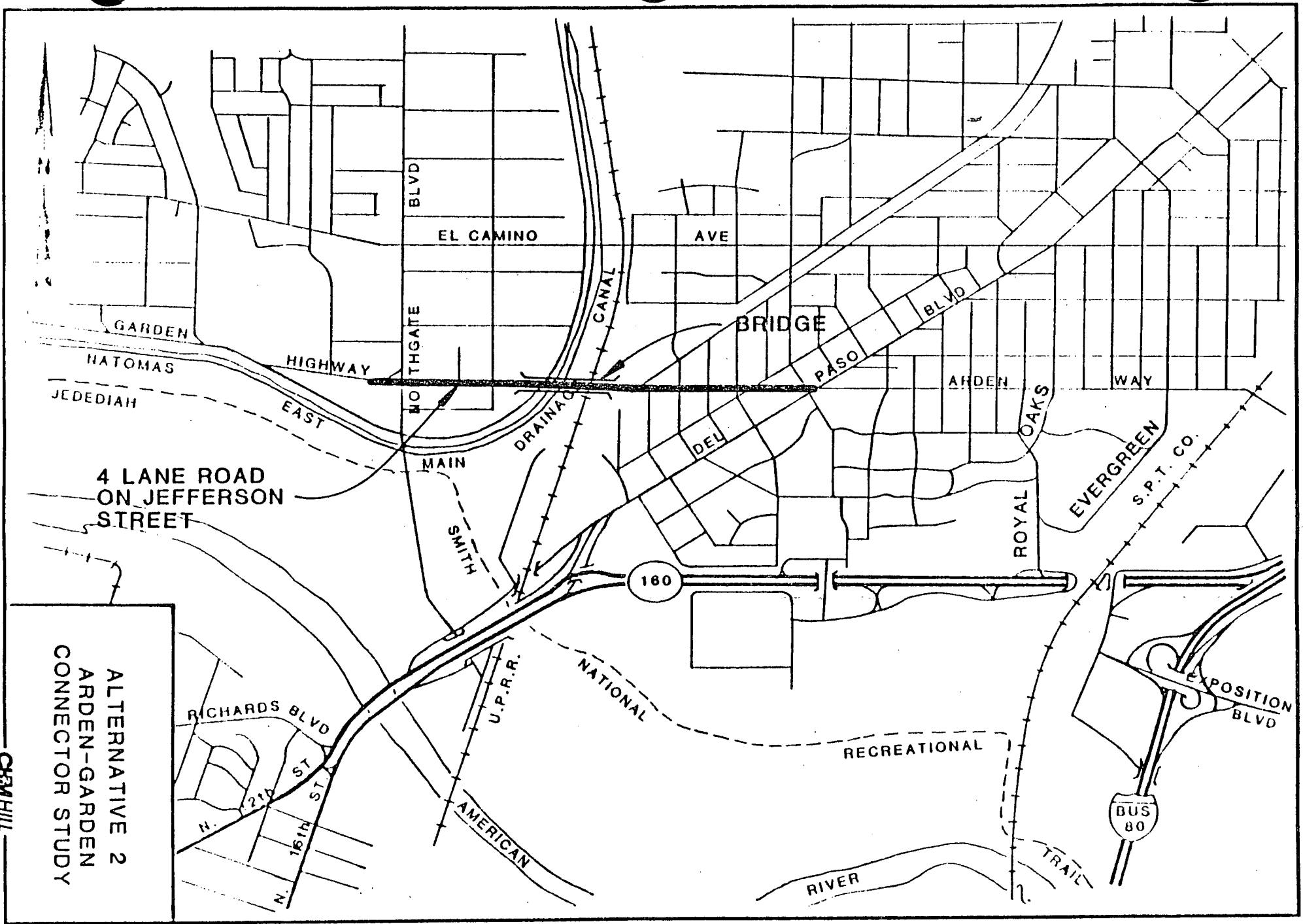


4 LANE ROAD ON EAST LEVEE ROAD

ALTERNATIVE 1
ARDEN-GARDEN
CONNECTOR STUDY

CHAMILL

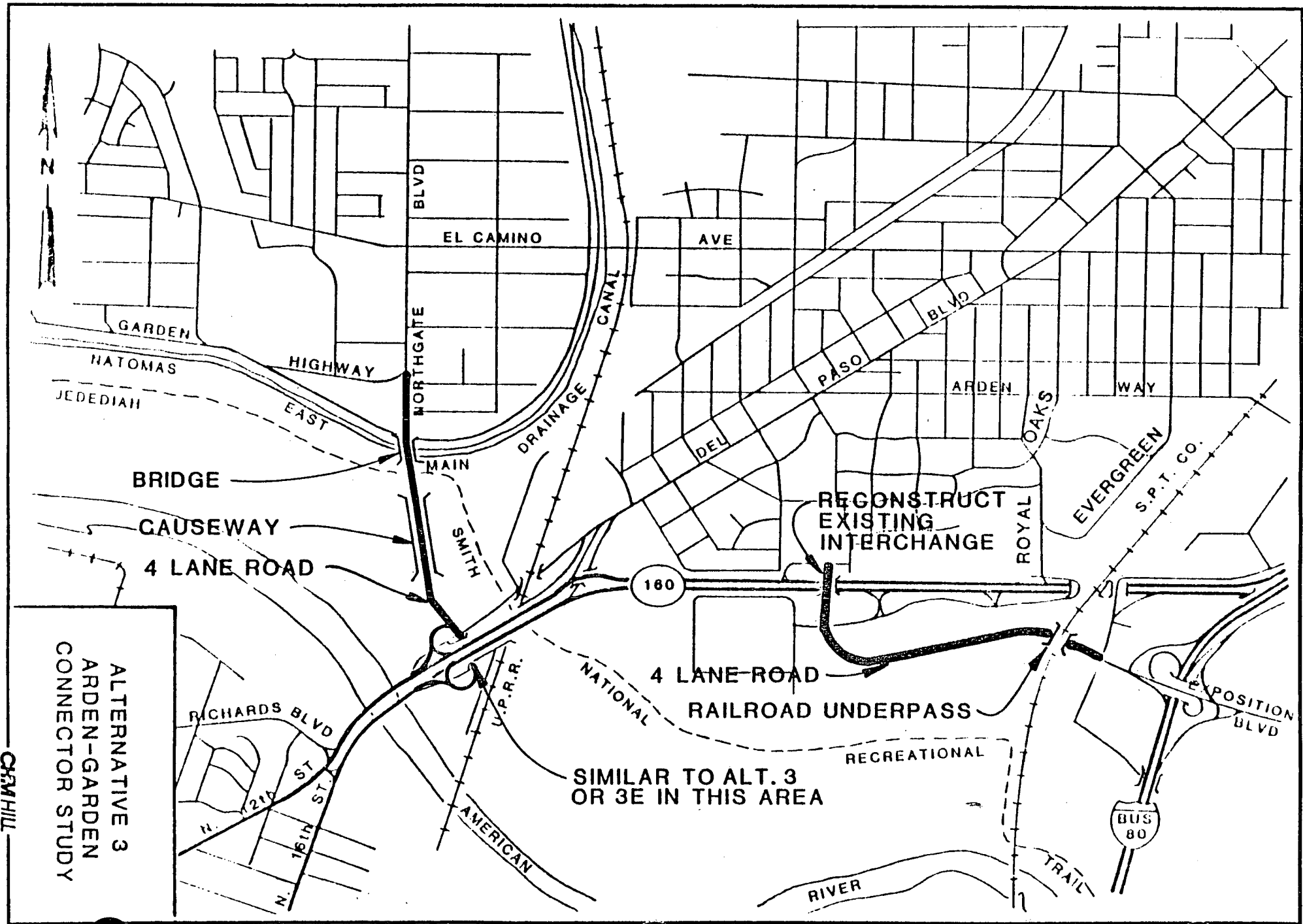
ALTERNATIVE 2
ARDEN-GARDEN
CONNECTOR STUDY



4 LANE ROAD
ON JEFFERSON
STREET

160

BUS
80



ALTERNATIVE 3
 ARDEN-GARDEN
 CONNECTOR STUDY

CHAMHILL

NORTHGATE
 BLVD

EL CAMINO
 AVE

GARDEN
 HIGHWAY

NATOMAS
 EAST

JEDEDIAH

BRIDGE

CAUSEWAY

4 LANE ROAD

MAIN
 SMITH

DRAINAGE
 CANAL

PASO
 BLVD

ARDEN
 WAY

WAY

RECONSTRUCT
 EXISTING
 INTERCHANGE

ROYAL
 OAKS

EVERGREEN

S.P.T. CO.

160

4 LANE ROAD

RAILROAD UNDERPASS

SIMILAR TO ALT. 3
 OR 3E IN THIS AREA

NATIONAL

RECREATIONAL

AMERICAN

RICHARDS BLVD

N. 1214 ST
 N. 1614 ST

RIVER

TRAIL

BUS
 80

EXPOSITION
 BLVD