TO:          HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM:       CITY MANAGER  DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND
            COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

DATE:       APRIL 14, 2007  CMR: 160:07

SUBJECT:    RESOLUTION APPROVING A COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT WITH
            CALTRANS AND A BUDGET AMENDMENT ORDINANCE IN THE
            AMOUNT OF $121,000 FOR THE CITY’S SHARE OF THE COST OF
            INSTALLATION OF A TRAFFIC SIGNAL AND ROADWAY
            IMPROVEMENTS AT THE INTERSECTION OF EL CAMINO REAL
            AND VENTURA AVENUE

RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that the City Council:

1. Adopt the attached Budget Amendment Ordinance in the amount of $121,000 to restore
   funding to project PL-02005, El Camino Real and Ventura Avenue intersection
   improvements.
2. Adopt a resolution approving a cooperative agreement between Caltrans and the City of
   Palo Alto to install a traffic signal and perform roadwork at the intersection of El Camino
   Real (Route 82) and Ventura Avenue.

BACKGROUND
The intersection of El Camino Real and Ventura Avenue is currently unsignalized. In 2000, in
response to a high volume of resident complaints regarding pedestrian safety and at least one
accident involving school children, Caltrans analyzed the intersection and determined that
conditions warranted installation of a traffic signal. Caltrans agreed to fund 67% of the project
costs and the City agreed to pay 33% of the project costs. Caltrans initially scheduled the project
for construction during the 2002/2003 fiscal year. Palo Alto proceeded to include the City’s
local share contribution ($61,000) in the Capital Improvement Program budget (PL-02005) in
2002. Later that year, Caltrans notified the City that the project was tentatively delayed until
2004/2005. It was subsequently deferred again.

Because of the uncertainty in the project timing, the City returned its share to the Infrastructure
Reserve, to be restored using “just-in-time” budgeting. This long-awaited project has now been
scheduled for construction by Caltrans in the summer of 2007, provided a cooperative agreement
and budget for the City’s share is approved. If the City chooses not to fund its share this year,
the project will be delayed to 2008, and may or may not proceed depending on its priority
relative to other Caltrans projects already scheduled for 2008.
DISCUSSION
El Camino Real is a six-lane highway which carries approximately 51,000 vehicles a day. Ventura Avenue serves a multi-family residential neighborhood as well as the Ventura Community Center. The Ventura neighborhood lies within the school attendance areas of Barron Park Elementary School, Terman Middle School and Gunn High School, all located to the west of El Camino Real. There is no easy access to the southbound side of El Camino Real for these residents. The nearest signalized intersection on El Camino Real to the south is at Los Robles and El Camino Way, approximately an eighth of a mile distant, and not easily accessible from Ventura Avenue. In order to cross El Camino Real, pedestrians must traverse six lanes of traffic and a left-turn lane. There is no significant pedestrian refuge, making the crossing difficult.

The proposed project would install a six-phase traffic signal at this intersection. As part of the project, the private driveway on the west approach would be signalized as well as the three roadway approaches. Signalized pedestrian crosswalks would be provided on the north, west and east legs of the intersection. City staff has requested that Caltrans equip the pedestrian signals with countdown signal heads and audible signals. All of the work will be completed within the Caltrans right-of-way. This project will not preclude further enhancements to the intersection consistent with the El Camino Real Master Schematic Design Concepts at a future date.

Since El Camino Real (Route 82) is a state highway, Caltrans is the lead agency. In order to proceed, a cooperative agreement between Caltrans and the City of Palo Alto is required. The proposed agreement establishes the responsibilities and duties of each party. Caltrans agrees to:

1. Complete all necessary plans and specifications
2. Complete all roadwork and electrical construction
3. Provide all engineering and construction services

Caltrans will retain owner and title to all materials, equipment and appurtenances. All costs are to be shared by Caltrans and the City of Palo Alto as shown in Exhibit A of the agreement.

The total cost of the project including design and construction is $450,000, including $337,100 for the traffic signal, lighting design, construction, and $180,200 for other road work. The City’s share of the construction cost is equal to approximately 33 percent of the traffic signal and lighting. The State will fund the remaining 67 percent of these costs as well as 100 percent of the additional road work. If the actual cost of the project is higher or lower, the City’s share will be adjusted accordingly. The attached Cooperative Agreement (Exhibit A of Attachment C) provides that the City’s share will not exceed $121,000 ($110,000, plus $11,000 contingency to allow Caltrans to award contracts for bids up to 10% higher than the cost estimate).

RESOURCE IMPACT
In the 2001-03 adopted capital budget, the City Council approved funding for this project in the amount of $61,000. The project was funded by a combination of the General Fund and Infrastructure Reserve. In May 2004 (CMR:273:04), this balance was returned to the Infrastructure Reserve, to be restored once Caltrans was prepared to proceed with the project. This CIP project (PL-02005) was one of the CIP projects with a balance returned to the Infrastructure Reserve (Attachment A).
The attached BAO will transfer $121,000 from the Infrastructure Reserve to this project. This is a one-time expense and no future year resource needs are anticipated as a result of this BAO.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**
This report does not represent any changes to existing City policies.

**TIMELINE**
If this BAO and Resolution are approved, Caltrans will begin work on the intersection in summer of 2007. The project will take 4-6 months to complete. Transportation staff has discussed this project with Public Works and Utilities staff during monthly coordination meetings. There are no conflicts with any City projects.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**
Caltrans, as the lead agency for this project, has determined that this project is categorically exempt under Section 15061(b)(3) of the guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This project does not fall within an exempt class, but it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility the project may have a significant effect on the environment. Staff concurs with this determination.

Further, approval of a Budget Amendment Ordinance is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act, and no environmental assessment is required.

**ATTACHMENT**
Attachment A: Budget Amendment Ordinance  
Attachment B: New CIP page from Project PL-02005  
Attachment C: Resolution approving Cooperative Agreement  
Attachment D: Aerial photo of El Camino Real / Ventura intersection  
Attachment E: Proposed traffic signal improvements

PREPARED BY: ____________________________
GAYLE LIKENS  
Transportation Manager

DEPARTMENT HEAD REVIEW: ____________________________
STEVE EMSLIE  
Director of Planning and Community Environment

CITY MANAGER APPROVAL: ____________________________
EMILY HARRISON  
Assistant City Manager