

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER

**DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND
COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT**

DATE: MAY 1, 2000

CMR:238:00

**SUBJECT: RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALO ALTO
APPROVING "LANDSCAPE BEAUTIFICATION OF EL CAMINO
REAL" AS A CITY PRIORITY**

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that City Council approve the attached Resolution (Attachment A).

BACKGROUND

State Route 82 (El Camino Real) is designated as a conventional highway by the State of California and is under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Caltrans maintains the infrastructure and pays a token amount to the City of Palo Alto to maintain the landscaped medians. This amount does not provide for upgrades of any significance. A request by Parks Department for a Landscape Design Study is currently under budget review as a Capital Improvement Project. For over a year, a working group has met regularly consisting of community advocates and citizens from other communities to discuss how to beautify the visual character of El Camino Real.

DISCUSSION

El Camino Real represents a historic and major present day commercial and commute thoroughfare in the City of Palo Alto. Major upgrades to physically enhance the visual quality and to improve and beautify the streetscape infrastructure by converting exposed asphalt and barren areas to shade has been long overdue. To date, several Caltrans restrictions have prevented local agencies from implementing these changes, the primary restriction being a policy that refuses to allow more trees in the medians of El Camino Real. Ongoing efforts to negotiate an agreement with Caltrans are currently being pursued to develop a landscape-planting plan.

This Resolution acknowledges the City of Palo Alto's commitment towards this goal and recognizes key challenges that must be met. The Councils of the Cities of Redwood City and Menlo Park have also adopted a similar Resolution reflecting this commitment. The

City of Palo Alto wishes to work in close regional cooperation with these cities, Senator Byron Sher of the 11th District of California and Caltrans.

RESOURCE IMPACT

There are no resource impacts from the adoption of this Resolution. Future budget implications of specific projects is unknown but would be incorporated at that time.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The resolution supports other programs to maintain and upgrade right-of-way areas of El Camino Real that are currently in place, and do not represent any change to existing City policies.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This Resolution is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Resolution

Prepared by: Dave Dockter, Managing Arborist, Planning Division

DEPARTMENT HEAD REVIEW: _____

G. EDWARD GAWF
Director of Planning and Community Environment

CITY MANAGER APPROVAL: _____

EMILY HARRISON
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