TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL
FROM: CITY MANAGER
DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT
DATE: MAY 16, 2005
SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO FILE AN APPLICATION FOR 2005/2006 TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT ACT FUNDS FOR BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PROJECTS

RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that the Council adopt the attached Resolution (Attachment A) authorizing submittal of Transportation Development Act (TDA) grant application documents for fiscal year 2005-2006 requesting $75,000 for the Maybell/Donald Bicycle Boulevard Project.

BACKGROUND
The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Agency (VTA) issued a call for projects in late March for the Fiscal Year 2005-2006 Transportation Development Act Article 3 Program for bicycle and pedestrian projects. VTA staff will review the project proposals for eligibility, completeness and compliance. The resulting countywide list of projects will be reviewed by the VTA Advisory Committees before adoption by the Board of Directors in June.

The TDA funding estimate for the Santa Clara County is $1,815,115. Under the policy guidelines adopted by the VTA in 2000, approximately $ 1,274,044 of the available funds will be assigned to the Guarantee Fund and distributed to local jurisdictions on a population-based apportionment formula. The remaining $541,093 will be reserved for countywide projects in the 10-year Countywide Bicycle Plan Expenditure Program.

DISCUSSION
Palo Alto’s guaranteed amount is $43,903, based on the City’s 3.48 percent of the county population. However, in 2002, Palo Alto received an advance of $200,000 for the Homer Undercrossing Project. Palo Alto agreed to forego future TDA guarantee funds until this advance is paid back with the annual guarantee allocation normally due to Palo Alto in future years. Currently, the outstanding balance is $89,200. Thus, the City is not eligible to claim the local Guarantee Funds this year and most likely not eligible next year if the City’s annual allocation is at a comparable level.
Palo Alto’s has three projects on the VTA Countywide Bicycle Expenditure Plan (BEP) list that would be eligible for funding from the $541,903 funds reserved for BEP projects: (1) the fully funded and completed Homer Undercrossing Project, (2) the California Avenue Pedestrian/Bicycle Underpass Replacement (currently in the feasibility study stage), and (3) and the Bicycle Boulevard/Bike Lanes projects identified in the top priority projects list in the adopted Palo Alto Bicycle Transportation Plan.

The VTA BEP includes $4,000,000 for the Bicycle Boulevards/Bike Lanes Project, which includes implementation of the entire list of the high priority bicycle boulevards (Class III bikeways) and bike lane (Class II bikeways) projects included in the Palo Alto Bicycle Transportation Plan. Staff has submitted a request to the VTA for $75,000 in TDA BEP funds for the implementation of the Maybell/Donald bicycle boulevard project. The Maybell/Donald corridor was identified as the top bicycle boulevard priority in the adopted 2003/2005 CIP Project PL-04010 (Bicycle Boulevards Implementation) because of its importance as a designated school commute corridor and primary commute route to Terman Middle School, Gunn High School and Juana Briones Elementary School.

During the past year, staff has worked with neighborhood residents, the Palo Alto Bicycle Advisory Committee, and PTA representatives to develop a plan for the Maybell/Donald corridor. In March 2005, the Planning and Transportation Commission recommended approval to the Director of Planning and Community Environment of an 8-month trial of the improvement plan which consists of a series of 5 speed tables and 4 median refuge islands along the .75 mile long corridor from El Camino Real to Arastadero Road as depicted in the attached map. No other permits or right-of-way clearances are needed to implement this project. Staff is preparing to go out to bid for the installation of the improvements in the late summer/early fall.

The TDA grant funds are allocated on a three-year basis. The funds are claimed by the City on a reimbursement basis. Staff will proceed with the trial and will return to Council for approval of the final plan next spring. Staff would not request reimbursement for project costs for the traffic calming until after the project is approved by the City Council for permanent installation.

Since 2002, the MTC has attached findings to the resolution authorizing submittal of the TDA grant application. Staff has provided sufficient information in this staff report to support the required findings and is not aware of any issues that would preclude the Council from adopting the findings for this grant request. By adopting the attached resolution and its findings, Council would be reconfirming its prior actions directing staff to proceed with the project.

Palo Alto Bicycle Advisory Committee Review
As required by the MTC grant application policies, the Maybell/Donald bicycle boulevard project was reviewed by PABAC on several occasions and the committee supports the project and funding for its implementation.

RESOURCE IMPACT
No local match is required for TDA funds. The City Council has already approved funding of $100,000 in the Bicycle Boulevards CIP project (PL-04010). These grant funds would be used to offset City funds. However, because TDA funds are disbursed on a reimbursement basis, if the City receives TDA funds it will have to spend the budgeted funds and then apply for reimbursement. The capital funding and the staff resources in the Transportation Division are
available to implement this project in the coming year. The project would also require typical street maintenance of traffic calming measures by the Public Works Department.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS
The recommended actions in this report are consistent with Comprehensive Plan transportation policies, the Bicycle Transportation Plan and the Transportation Strategic Plan. Bicycle Boulevards are identified at high priority projects on the latter two documents.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
Seven new bicycle boulevards, including Maybell/Donald were identified in the Bicycle Transportation Plan (BTP) adopted by the City Council in November 2003. The BTP was analyzed pursuant to CEQA by the Comprehensive Plan Update Final Environmental Impact Report (“EIR”) an Addendum to the EIR which were certified by the City Council as the environmental document for the BTP on November 24, 2003 in Council Resolution No. 8372. Staff subsequently prepared a project specific Negative Declaration for the Maybell/Donald Bicycle Boulevard project for the trial installation of the Maybell/Donald Bicycle Boulevard project finding that the project would not have a signification effect on the environment.

ATTACHMENTS
A. Resolution Authorizing the Filing of Application for TDA Funds
B. Memorandum from Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
C. Map of Maybell/Donald Bicycle Boulevard improvements

PREPARED BY: 
GAYLE LIKENS
Transportation Projects Manager

DEPARTMENT HEAD: 
STEVE EMSLIE
Director of Planning and Community Environment

CITY MANAGER APPROVAL: 
EMILY HARRISON
Assistant City Manager

cc: Palo Alto Bicycle Advisory Committee
Maybell/Donald Working Group members