TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

DATE: January 22, 2008

CMR:111:08

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF REQUEST TO INITIATE A PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF A PLANNED COMMUNITY (PC) APPLICATION FOR A 3-STORY MIXED USE OFFICE/RETAIL DEVELOPMENT AT 2180 EL CAMINO REAL.

RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that the City Council approve the applicant’s request for a preliminary review and direct the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) to conduct a preliminary review of a project at 2180 El Camino Real. Commission preliminary review is tentatively scheduled for February 13, 2008.

BACKGROUND
Chilcote Family Trust is proposing a project that would include the redevelopment of the city block bounded by College Avenue, Oxford Avenue, El Camino Real, and Staunton Court. The proposal would include construction of a three story retail/office building, a neighborhood market, a two story below-grade parking structure, and a landscaped park space open to the public. The applicant wishes to have preliminary Council review of the project for a Planned Community and needs approval from Council to schedule the preliminary review.

DISCUSSION
Palo Alto Municipal Code (PAMC) Section 18.79.030(b) states that concurrence of the City Council is necessary to conduct a preliminary review. The purposes of a preliminary review, as stated in PAMC Section 18.79.010, are:

a) To maximize opportunities for meaningful public discussion of development projects, at the earliest feasible time, for the guidance of the public, project proponents, and City decision makers.

b) To focus public and environmental review of development projects on the issues of greatest significance to the community, including but not limited to planning concerns, neighborhood
compatibility, Comprehensive Plan consistency, economics, social costs and benefits, fiscal costs and benefits, technological factors, and legal issues. These procedures are not intended to permit or foreclose debate on the merits of approval or disapproval of any given development project.

c) To provide members of the public with the opportunity to obtain early information about development projects in which they may have an interest.
d) To provide project proponents with the opportunity to obtain early, non-binding preliminary comments on development projects to encourage sound and efficient private decisions about how to proceed.
e) To encourage early communication between elected and appointed public officials and staff with respect to the implementation of City policies, standards, and regulations on particular development projects.
f) To facilitate orderly and consistent implementation of the City’s Comprehensive Plan and development regulations.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The Council may choose the following alternatives in accordance with Section 18.79.040(b):

1) The Council may direct the study session to be conducted solely by the City Council, or
2) The Council may direct that the study session be conducted solely by the Planning Commission, or
2) The Council may direct staff to arrange a joint meeting of the City Council and Planning and Transportation Commission and any other City boards whose participation is deemed desirable.

RESOURCE IMPACT

Applicants for any preliminary review submit a fee deposit, against which staff time expended to process the application is charged, as a part of the City’s cost recovery program.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Policy implications of the project would be discussed during the preliminary review before Council.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Appropriate environmental review will be conducted for this project, however it is not required at the time of preliminary review. Environmental issues would be highlighted for the Council during the preliminary review of this project.