TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL
FROM: CITY MANAGER DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT
DATE: APRIL 7, 2008 CMR: 191:08

SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF A COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR THE STANFORD AVENUE/EL CAMINO REAL (ROUTE 82) INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution approving a cooperative agreement between the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the City of Palo Alto for the environmental evaluation, design and construction phases of the El Camino Real/Stanford Avenue Streetscape and Intersection Improvement Project.

BACKGROUND
This project includes the environmental evaluation, design and construction of improvements to implement the demonstration phase of the El Camino Real Master Design Plan developed by Caltrans and the City of Palo Alto. The project area includes the intersection of El Camino Real and Stanford Avenue and extends approximately 100 feet beyond the intersection along all four approaches to the intersection. The proposed project includes installation of new corner bulb-outs, realignment and enhanced/textured paving of the pedestrian crosswalks, two new pedestrian refuges with bollards and in-ground lighting, widened landscape medians with planting and street trees, widened sidewalk with street trees, transit amenities and street furniture, new ornamental street and sidewalk lights, signal poles and new storm drain outlets. Since El Camino Real (Route 82) is a state highway, Caltrans will be the lead agency for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review. Design plans will be prepared per Caltrans design standards, and will be submitted to Caltrans for its review. In order to proceed, a cooperative agreement between Caltrans and the City of Palo Alto is required.

In December 2006, the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) Board of Directors approved $1,334,000 in Community Design and Transportation (CDT) grant funding for the El Camino/Stanford Avenue Project. These funds are a combination of both federal and state funding and authorization will be required for the use of the funds for each phase of the project.
On April 16, 2007, City Council accepted the award of $1,334,000 in federal transportation grant funds for the El Camino Real/Stanford Avenue Streetscape and Intersection Improvement Project PL-07002, to be paid on a reimbursement basis from the VTA CDT capital grant program.

Staff has been working with the Caltrans Office of Local Assistance to complete all necessary paperwork in order to authorize use of the funds and begin the environmental review and design phase of the project. Staff was informed in October 2007 that a Cooperative Agreement between the City and Caltrans was necessary because a portion of this project is located on El Camino Real, which is a state highway. The California Transportation Commission (CTC) approved the use of funds at its December 13, 2007 meeting. Completion of forms necessary for the federal portion of the funds also needs to be finalized.

**DISCUSSION**
The Cooperative Agreement provides details of the roles and responsibilities of each agency for each phase (environmental review, design, right of way and construction) of the project. A signed cooperative agreement is needed before the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 2008 in order for Caltrans to authorize funding to be set aside for the environmental and design phase of the project.

City staff will retain the services of a consultant to provide complete environmental and design services for the construction of the El Camino/Stanford Avenue Streetscape project. Services will include environmental assessment of the project, urban design, civil and traffic engineering as required. The consultant will prepare construction drawings at the 30%, 60%, 90% and 100% stages and will finalize the construction documents and cost estimates for the project. The City will work closely with Caltrans to ensure timely review and submittal of all engineering and construction services.

**RESOURCE IMPACT**
Total funding for the environmental, design and construction of the project is estimated at $1,668,000. The CDT grant requires a 20% local match of $334,000. The remaining $1,334,000 will be from federal funding sources. Local match funds totaling $334,000 will be provided by the City’s CIP projects PL-98013 (School Commute Safety Improvements), PL-04101 (Bicycle Boulevards Implementation Project) and from staff time in-kind services.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**
This project is consistent with existing policy, including Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element policies. In addition, the El Camino Real/Stanford Avenue intersection is identified as a critical intersection on the City’s adopted School Commute Corridors network as well as in the Palo Alto Bicycle Transportation Plan. This improvement was also identified on the El Camino Real Master Planning Study.
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
The environmental review of the project will be conducted prior to the completion of the design of the project. Caltrans, as the lead agency for CEQA and NEPA, will determine the type of documentation required and will cause that documentation to be prepared by the City.

ATTACHMENTS
A. Resolution Approving Cooperative Agreement

PREPARED BY:

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