Summary Title: Gran Fondo/Taste of Palo Alto

Title: Request for Approval to Authorize the City Manager to Sponsor The Palo Alto Gran Fondo/Echelon Challenge/ Taste of Palo Alto Community Event for September 17, 2011, Not to Exceed $50,000.

From: City Manager

Lead Department: City Manager

Recommendation
Staff recommends that Council authorize the City Manager to sponsor the combined Palo Alto Gran Fondo, Echelon Challenge relay, and Taste of Palo Alto event for September 17, 2011 not to exceed a total value of $50,000.

Executive Summary
The Gran Fondo, or Italian for “Big Ride” is a fundraising bike ride concept that will gather a group of approximately 500 cycling enthusiasts for a 60, 80, or 95 mile ride on Saturday September 17th, 2011. It will start early on morning with a police escort out of town, and then become a “rules of the road” fun ride, spreading out to the coast, and eventually making its way back to downtown for the finish.

Directly after the Fondo riders make their way out of downtown, the Echelon Challenge begins. The concept for the Echelon Challenge is also a fundraising ride, but for less serious riders and walkers. An approximately 1 mile loop near downtown/ SOFA area will be closed off for 4 hours. Teams of walkers and riders will solicit funds for local charities based on how many laps their team can accomplish. An RF tag on each person/ bike will record the laps in real time, and a total fundraising number will be displayed throughout the event.

The last component of the event includes an entertainment and vendor area as well as the Taste of Palo Alto, where for a small fee, visitors and
Residents can sample an array of food from local restaurants as well as enjoy non-alcoholic beverages and beer & wine, while listening to a live performance of a local band.

This community-focused event will be a great chance to showcase downtown Palo Alto, as well as our community's health and bike-related focuses. Staff expects that the event will be well received by the entire community, and will raise funds for our local non-profit causes. It will also increase visibility for Palo Alto as a bike-friendly and healthy place to shop, dine, stay, live, and work. Based on the success of the event, staff believes this could become an annual event.

**Background**

Special events in Palo Alto happen all year round. In cases where they are non-City sponsored, the organizers plans the event, and makes application to the City’s Special Events Committee who reviews and approves the event. In these cases the event organizers bears full financial responsibility for all costs, including the City’s various permit, staffing, overtime, signage, and other fees. In cases where the City Council decides to sponsor an event, fees and staff costs can be considered in-kind contributions towards the event. Often, City sponsorship will offset a portion of the total costs for an event, as the City Council usually sets spending limits.

Factors such as increased hotel occupancy and taxable sales, community building, and increased visibility for businesses are most frequently considered by the Council.

In this case, the event is of a scale and a focused on the local community, staff expects only minimal hotel occupancy and taxable sales increases. Due to the fact that the event is geared towards promoting bicycle travel, and health and well-being, the event aligns with Council priorities. It will also attract local visitors to our downtown, raising the visibility of one of our prime shopping and eating destinations.

The event itself will provide funding for both the Palo Alto Recreation Foundation as well as the Palo Alto Kiwanis Clubs, both long standing, and highly respected local 501(c)(3)’s. Additionally, participants will have the ability to raise funds for many other non-profits. The organizers of the
event will also delineate a portion of the proceeds to the Lance Armstrong Foundation, which is devoted to funding cancer research.

A significant factor for Council to consider is that the event is centered on fundraising for local non-profit organizations. While not a direct offset to the anticipated costs of the event, the contributions to community wellness programs will certainly be a desirable outcome. Besides the direct opportunities for the Kiwanis Club and Palo Alto Recreation Foundation, the event organizers will reach out to health-oriented non-profits in the community for participation. The Echelon Challenge will be open for participation by teams raising funds for their specific 501(c)(3).

**Discussion**

The Gran Fondo ride presents a relatively low impact to traffic and other concerns, since it essentially begins as a peloton, but soon thins out as it makes its way out of town. A “rolling enclosure” will ensure the riders’ safety from downtown to Oregon Expressway via the Bike Boulevard, and then the riders will spread out as the ride continues, making the need for further police escort unnecessary. The organizers of the event have contacted other cities and regional authorities, and their route meets all safety concerns.

As could be imagined, however, mapping a closed loop and food and vendor area in Downtown Palo Alto was quite a challenge. Many factors needed to be considered such as business impacts, traffic flow and safety, convenience of access for residential concerns.

Working together with the City Manager’s Office, Police, Transportation, the downtown Farmer’s Market, and the Business Community, event organizers have developed the attached map, which represents the best balance of many competing concerns, while minimizing the inconvenience for downtown residents. Once sponsorship from the City is approved, they have committed to informing all those concerned of the impacts, alternative means of access, as well as the opportunities for involvement in the community event.

Total costs for the event are estimated at $100,000, and include additional police and other staff costs, signage, waste and sanitation facilities, vendor
booths, security, traffic control, and other elements. As a first year event with hopes of becoming annual, staff recommends that the Council approve a sponsorship of one-half of the total costs, which will not exceed $50,000 of fee waivers and in-kind contributions such as staff overtime, equipment usage, and traffic barriers. Staff does not recommend that the City would make any cash payments to the event organizers. Based on the success of this year’s event, staff recommends that the City Council reconsider its participation in future years.

**Timeline**
The preparations for the event will begin several days before the event with parking and other signage put in place. Early morning before the event, towing and other last-minute traffic routing would take place, followed by booth, stage, signage, and other set up.

The Gran Fondo riders will make their way to downtown and gather for the start of the ride by 7:15 AM. The ride will leave at about 7:30 AM; the last rider will leave the downtown well before 8:00 AM. The Echelon Challenge would begin immediately thereafter, and last until Noon.

The Taste of Palo Alto will begin at Noon, and last until about 4:00 PM. Breakdown of all the events is expected to start at 4:30 PM, and will be finished by 7:00 PM, with streets re-opening directly thereafter.

**Resource Impact**
$50,000 maximum impact to the City Council Contingency Fund.

**Policy Implications**
The Mayor and Council have designated 2011 as the “Year of the Bike”. This event will serve as a major celebration, culminating all of the City’s various bicycle-focused plans and activities for the year. The event organizers are very open to engaging the City’s messaging regarding the importance of safe bicycle travel as a mode of daily transportation, as well as a great way to stay healthy.

**Environmental Review**
This event is exempt from environmental review.
Attachments:
- Challenge Map (PDF)
- Gran Fondo Map (PDF)
- Gran Fondo Kiwanis Letter (PDF)

Prepared By: Steve Emslie, Deputy City Manager

Department Head: James Keene, City Manager

City Manager Approval: James Keene, City Manager
Echelon Gran Fondo Palo Alto
Preliminary Course & Traffic Flow Proposal
Event: Sat Sept 17, 2011
March 31, 2011

Honorable City Council
City of Palo Alto
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Dear Members of the City Council:

The Kiwanis Club of Palo Alto Charitable Foundation and the Palo Alto Recreation Foundation have teamed up to bring a new, exciting, and hopefully annual community event to Palo Alto called the Taste of Palo Alto. We plan to operate the Taste in downtown in conjunction with and adjacent to the Palo Alto Gran Fondo and Echelon Challenge bicycling events on Saturday, September 17, 2011.

The Taste of Palo Alto will feature 30 of Palo Alto’s favorite restaurant, hotel and catering chefs, and will allow participants to sample the best foods available in our area. The proceeds from ticket and beverage sales will be used to benefit the children and youth of Palo Alto through the charities and service projects that Kiwanis supports and through the programs the Recreation Foundation supports.

The two organizations are seeking City Council endorsement of City co-sponsorship of the Taste of Palo Alto. We see the City as an important partner in creating an event that is fun; that serves as a show piece for local businesses; and benefits the children and youth of our community as well.

There are several benefits to partnering with the Gran Fondo/Echelon Challenge events as well. We expect that attendance at both events will increase if held simultaneously and contiguous to each other. Both can share expenses, including City resources, which will result in more efficient use of public and private resources and a better bottom line for the beneficiary local charities.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Yours truly,

Lanie Wheeler
Kiwanis Club of Palo Alto

Patricia Emslie
Palo Alto Recreation Foundation