TO:        HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL
FROM:      CITY MANAGER       DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND
            COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT
DATE:      JULY 22, 2002
SUBJECT:   151 LAURA LANE: SITE AND DESIGN REVIEW FOR A NEW
            PUBLIC ACCESSIBLE PEDESTRIAN PATHWAY CONNECTING
            THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL AND THE BAYLANDS
            ATHLETIC CENTER’S PARKING LOT [02-D-01, 02-ARB-36] AND
            APPROVAL OF LICENSE AGREEMENT

RECOMMENDATION
Staff, the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Planning and Transportation Commission, and the Architectural Review Board recommend that the City Council approve the Site and Design for the proposed pedestrian pathway based on the findings and subject to the Conditions of Approval in Attachment A.

Staff recommends that the City Council authorize the Mayor to execute the attached license agreement between the City of Palo Alto and the International School.

BACKGROUND
City Council reviewed this project at its April 8, 2002 meeting and referred the project to the related commissions and boards for review, as well as directing staff to prepare an agreement between the City and the school.

The proposed pedestrian pathway is 1,095 foot long and will traverse parcels owned by the International School, Santa Clara Valley Water District and the City of Palo Alto. The project involves installation of new path and the repair of an existing path on City-owned land. The material being used for the new section of the pathway is decomposed granite, which is pervious and allows drainage. This material is more natural in appearance than other paving materials and will not create heat spots as would an asphalt surface. The Public Works division has reviewed the grading plan for the path and will coordinate with the school to eliminate any drainage and runoff impacts. The proposed path will be maintained as a fully accessible public pedestrian pathway and will not be gated. The new segment of path, starting at the school, will be 333 feet long and made of
decomposed granite path with low-level bollard lighting. The remaining 762 feet of path is 9 foot wide and will be repaired as required by the City.

**DISCUSSION**
In order for the pathway to be constructed and utilized, the school needs an agreement with the City and also with the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD). The license agreement (Attachment B) provides for path construction, ingress and egress and maintenance of the pathway. Major terms include construction of the path at the school’s expense, non-exclusive ingress/egress rights, and City maintenance of the path with the school to reimburse the City for one-half the cost of maintenance. The license is for an indefinite term and is revocable at the will of the City.

The school has made arrangements with SCVWD for a land swap at a future date which will give the school ownership of the district's land on which part of the pathway will be constructed. SCVWD is in support of the project and will work with the City and the school to make the necessary arrangement for immediate access and use.

The SCVWD has provided the City with a copy of a Botanical Survey of the area affected by the new section of path. This survey determined that “there are no wetland issues or sensitive plant species issues” for this area. The removed wildlife cover and habitat will be re-supplied when the SCVWD replants the levee providing an improved ecological area. The project includes coordination by the school and the City’s Naturalist to survey the site adjacent to the existing post office fence for any ground nesting, roosting, or other significant wildlife before any work begins.

As part of the review of the path project, Council also wanted the school to update its Transportation Management Plan. Staff has reviewed the proposed plan and finds that it would adequately address the school’s operation (Attachment C). Some of the highlights of the plan are as follows:

- Staggered arrival and drop-off times of students. A colored placard system, associated with a designated pick-up time has been established with the parents to control the flow of the cars during the afternoon pick-up.
- “Van Plan” carpool program established to assist parents with organized carpooling. The school is also committed to work to create incentives to encourage more participants.
- After school programs and free childcare (until 4 p.m.) allow for student pick-up later in the day.
- School staff has worked with the City’s Transportation Division to develop the potential of a new shuttle stop for the Embarcadero Shuttle that would be easily accessible at the Baylands Athletic Center (BAC). The school will follow up on this once the pathway project has been approved.
- The parents of the students will use the public parking lot during specific times in the day for morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up. Staff does not anticipate that
this limited increase in use of the parking lot will have negative impacts on the available parking at the BAC because it is during weekday non-peak use hours (7:45-8:30 a.m. and 3:00-3:45 p.m).

**BOARD/COMMISSION REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

On June 25, 2002, the Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed the project and expressed their support of the project. The issue was raised regarding the use of the levee for the path as opposed to providing a new section of land. Staff was present and responded to the issues raised.

On June 26, 2002, the Planning and Transportation Commission reviewed the project and recommended that the Council approve the project. There was concern expressed from Commission members that the increased use of the Geng Road/Embarcadero Road intersection would create a new traffic impact, specifically the left turn movement from Geng Road. The Commission recommended as a condition that the school shall coordinate with the City to provide traffic monitoring to assess the circulation from the new drop-off/pick-up program.

On July 11, 2002, the Architectural Review Board reviewed the project and recommended that the Council approve the project. The board reviewed and discussed the design, materials to be used, and the environmental impacts of the project and unanimously approved the project.

**RESOURCE IMPACT**

The construction of the new pathway and the repairs necessary for the existing path will be paid for by the school. The maintenance costs will be shared equally between the City and the school and are further described in the License Agreement (Attachment B).

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The project is exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); Section 15304.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The project is in conformance with City of Palo Alto’s Comprehensive Plan and the Baylands Master Plan. Analysis and review was done to ensure the pathway is a supportable use in the Baylands. Please see Attachment D describing policies and programs related to the proposed uses at the Baylands Athletic Center.

The installation of this pathway provides a benefit to the school as well as to the public. This pathway will provide an alternate entry/exit point for pedestrians using the BAC as well as visitors to Baylands. The pathway is designed for daylight hour use. There are some commercial uses around Laura Lane where employees may also use the path for lunch hours.
ATTACHMENTS/EXHIBITS:
Attachment A  Site & Design Findings and Draft Conditions of Approval
Attachment B  License Agreement
Attachment C  Transportation Management Plan
Attachment D  Table: Policies and Program Related to the Proposed Uses at the
               Baylands Athletic Center
Attachment E  Planning and Transportation Commission Staff Report (w/o attachments)
Attachment F  Planning and Transportation Commission Verbatim Minutes, June 26, 2002
Attachment G  Santa Clara Valley Water District Correspondence
Attachment H  Location map
Attachment I  Project Plans (Council members only)

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