



Staff Report

STATUS REPORT ON DOWNTOWN URBAN PLANNING/"TRANSFORMING EL CAMINO REAL" PROJECT

Honorable Chair and Board Members:

Summary/Background

At the November 1, 2005 Planning Commission meeting, staff conducted a study session in consultation with the project Design Consultant, Bottomly & Associates, to review a scope of work for the San Mateo County "Transforming El Camino Real" project. This project focuses on the multi-city planning effort for potential improvements to Caltrain station areas and adjoining streets and intersections within Belmont, San Carlos, and Redwood City.

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) & SamTrans is administering a grant from the Transportation for Livable Communities Program for the project. The project serves to build upon the recommendations made as part of the 2003 Peninsula Corridor Plan that was prepared by Project for Public Spaces, Inc., and facilitate the planning/design efforts around such improvements to the CalTrain Station/surrounding areas. Staff can provide copies of the Peninsula Corridor Plan for the Council if desired.

Major objectives for the project are as follows:

- Promote a smart growth corridor, linking transportation with economic development
- Improve access to CalTrain station areas (improving pedestrian access)
- Expand non-auto circulation throughout the corridor
- Enhance visual quality and image

Goals for Belmont from the Peninsula Corridor Plan are as follows:

- The train station should be a community public space on both sides (El Camino Real and Old County Rd)
- Crossings should be improved along El Camino Real
- Green buffer or edge on east side of El Camino along frontage parking area should be created
- Widen/upgrade/repair sidewalks on both sides of El Camino Real

- Lanes at El Camino Real should be narrowed to allow for wider sidewalks and to create pedestrian refuges at medians in the street
- Bus stops and shelters should generally be improved

This Priority Calendar Item (Review of the Transforming El Camino Real Project) was adopted by the City Council during their Spring 2005 review; the Planning Commission was deemed to be the major “stakeholder” in the draft plan formulation phase for the project.

The 11/1/05 Planning Commission study session served as the first meeting for the Commission to review a context map, photographs, plan area conditions, and potential design approaches for streetscape improvements to the adjoining CalTrain streets (See Attachment A - Project Boundary Area). The study area is approximately 3,000 feet in length – from the 500 Block of El Camino Real (U-Haul building) to the north to O’Neill Street to the south.

Future Commission meetings are to be scheduled to eventually work towards a draft recommendation for area plan improvements to be forwarded to the City Council for approval. The next Commission meeting to review potential modifications to the draft plan is targeted for their second meeting in February 2006 (2/21/06).

Fiscal Impact

None at this time.

Public Contact

1. Posting of the Redevelopment Agency Agenda.

Recommendation

Allow staff to continue working with the Planning Commission to refine elements of recommended area plan improvements to be forwarded to the City Council for future review and approval.

Alternative

1. Direct staff to prepare an alternative course of action.

Attachments

- A. Scope of Work/Project Boundary Plan
Respectfully submitted,

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PLEASE NOTE:

Attachment A is not included as part of this document - please contact the City Clerk's Office at (650) 595-7413 for further information on this attachment.