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To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Nguyen, Hoa](#)
Subject: Historical Information Related to Consent Item 4.9
Date: Monday, October 24, 2022 4:01:46 PM

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Dear Councilmembers,

Today I learned of the planned removal of the two heritage canary island palm trees at 96 West El Camino Real, as part of Consent Calendar Item 4.9 on your agenda tomorrow. In advance of the approval, I'd like to share some historical information for you to consider. I've also cc-ed the staff person listed on the council report so they also have this information.

The two canary island palm trees proposed for removal once framed either side of the Victorian-era home of the Taylor family, one of the first families to settle in the original town of Mountain View. In 1861, the Taylors purchased and operated the inn at the town's stagecoach stop (located where the BMW dealership is today). Over the years, members of the Taylor family played a prominent role in the town's early history. More info on the Taylors can be read [here](#). In 1877, the family built their home on the site now occupied by the Cusimano family mortuary. Given their age, the palm trees were likely planted by members of the Taylor family in what was once their home's front yard. The house was demolished around 1960 but the palm trees were kept. It appears when El Camino Real was widened, the street designers found the trees important enough to alter the standard curblineline to preserve them. The palms have thus survived as a living reminder of the long history of this stretch of El Camino Real as the former center of the stage-coach era town of Mountain View and one of the last physical links to this era of the city's history.

I just wanted you to be aware of this history before approving the removal of these trees. I'm not familiar with the specifics of the planned bike facility design, but I do wonder if it'd be possible to reroute the planned bike lane around the trees (effectively turning the trees and their planting area into a median separating the bike lane from traffic) and expand the sidewalk on to the 96 West El Camino Real property when/if it is redeveloped. Although that may not be worth the expense and effort, and you may find the proposed 5:1 tree replacement to be sufficient mitigation for the removal of these historic trees. In any event, I just wanted to share this information so you are aware of the hidden history behind why the trees are there.

Attached is a screenshot from my book, *Mountain View Then & Now* that shows the trees before and after the Taylor family home was demolished.

All the best,

Nick Perry



Two tall palm trees still mark the location of the Taylor family house at 96 West El Camino Real. The 1877 Victorian home pictured above was an Old Mountain View landmark until it was demolished in 1960 to make way for the Cusimano Family Colonial Mortuary. In addition to running

their mortuary, Joseph and Sue Cusimano were active participants in Mountain View's civic life. Joseph served on the city council from 1968 to 1974 and as mayor in 1974. (Historical image courtesy MVHA.)



THE LOST OLD TOWN: EARLY EL CAMINO REAL