

ONE IRVINE

Neighborhood Action Plan North El Camino Real

JANUARY 2020



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CHAPTER 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Irvine is a safe and inviting community in the heart of Orange County. Incorporated in 1971, the City was thoughtfully designed to include excellent housing, superior recreation areas, world-class educational facilities, and a thriving business community.

Envisioned and designed as a series of master-planned villages, each neighborhood in Irvine has its own unique qualities that help contribute to the beauty of our community.

With a diverse population and a wide range of neighborhoods and housing types, we take pride in ensuring that the City remains a beautiful community to live in. While spending time in our neighborhoods, it's clear that the inviting landscapes, safe streets, and well-maintained homes are a key part of what makes the City an attractive place for residents to grow and thrive.



ONE IRVINE

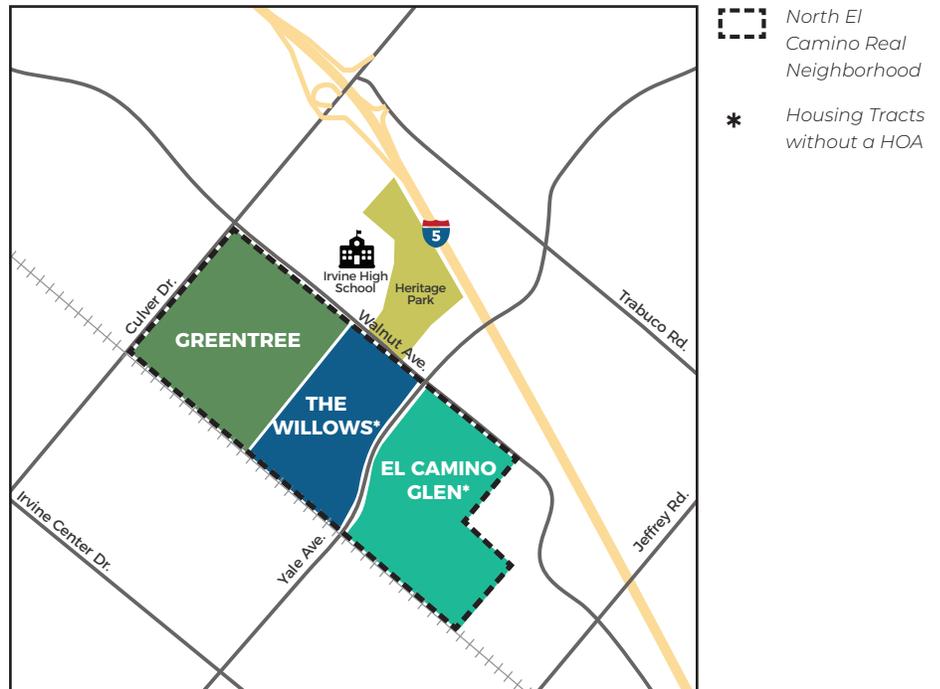
Now 50 years after our City's founding, new challenges and priorities have arisen that are key to maintaining the high quality of life our residents enjoy. As a community, we can work together to strengthen our neighborhoods for generations to come. We are a City of villages, but we are One Irvine. The success of each village is vital for the whole of the City to thrive well into the future.

In 2019, the City of Irvine launched One Irvine – a program designed to help connect Irvine residents with a variety of resources aimed at strengthening our community. Each year, one of the City's neighborhoods will receive focused City and community attention to address the unique needs of the residents living within the area. By providing tools, resources, and specialized strategies, we will work together with residents to identify opportunities to enhance the neighborhood. The One Irvine program combines the support offered by both Irvine's Neighborhood Services Division and Code Enforcement, to work collaboratively with residents to enhance neighborhood conditions and facilitate specific improvement projects.

NORTH EL CAMINO REAL NEIGHBORHOOD

The first focus neighborhood is North El Camino Real which includes three single family housing tracts: the Willows, Greentree, and El Camino Glen. As one of the oldest neighborhoods in Irvine, this area has a rich history and has made significant contributions to the fabric of our City.

North El Camino Real Neighborhood



THEME 1:

Homeowners want to make home improvements, but lack time, knowledge, and/or resources.

THEME 2:

Residents want to be more engaged and have a stronger sense of community identity.

THEME 3:

Residents love their neighborhood, but there may be ways the City can help make it even better.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

As part of the One Irvine program, the City of Irvine has reached out to residents of the North El Camino Real study area in a multifaceted outreach program designed to engage community members. The outreach program for this project is inclusive, educational, and designed to facilitate a meaningful conversation with the North El Camino Real community about the issues and opportunities that are most important to them. Two pop-up events including a neighborhood block party and an online survey were conducted to provide opportunities for community members to discuss their vision for their neighborhood, issues related to home and yard maintenance, safety, and neighborhood connections.

Information from the community survey was used to understand the neighborhood vision, and craft action items to address key opportunities within the neighborhood.

NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN VISION STATEMENT

Through ongoing public engagement with the community, three key themes have arisen as listed in the left-hand column. The action items contained in this Neighborhood Action Plan all support and relate to these three themes. Success will be measured in relation to how well these action items are accomplished within an established 18 month timeframe. After meeting with City Council, the next steps will be to host a Community Launch Event in Spring 2020, where details of the plan will be shared with the community and feedback will be solicited.

CHAPTER 2. INTRODUCTION TO NEIGHBORHOOD AND SUBAREAS



HISTORY

The City of Irvine was incorporated on December 28, 1971 and soon became one of the nation's largest planned urban communities. The 65 plus square miles of land that make up Irvine grew largely around the University of California Irvine, which began construction in the early 1960s. Irvine was designed and built by the Irvine Company. Irvine Company planners and architects drew up master plans for a city of 50,000. Following popular trends and ideals of the time, Irvine was designed as a series of "villages" with each village separated by six-lane streets and containing residential areas, commercial centers, schools, religious institutions, and open spaces. Irvine was envisioned as a community that would allow residents an easy and comfortable lifestyle, and included design elements such as cul-de-sacs, parks, and greenbelts. While Irvine has grown and changed significantly over time, these common elements remain throughout the City and continue to influence growth and development.

Though much of the residential development in Irvine is relatively new, the first residential communities—including North El Camino Real—in Irvine were completed in the early 1970s. The neighborhood of North El Camino Real is one of the City's oldest residential neighborhoods, located in the geographic and historic heart of the City.

ONE IRVINE

In 2019, the City of Irvine embarked on a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization initiative called One Irvine. The goal of this program is to engage residents and stakeholders to spark long-lasting, community-led reinvestment and revitalization and eliminate code issues throughout the community, particularly in the City's older neighborhoods. From Irvine's inception, neighborhoods were planned and developed as villages. These neighborhoods are one of the City's most distinguishing characteristics and one of the City's greatest assets. As the City ages, the protection and preservation of each neighborhood is essential for the whole to remain safe, vibrant, and flourishing well into the future. The City will focus on one neighborhood at a time, beginning with the northern residential tracts of El Camino Real, referred to as "North El Camino Real".

One Irvine is a program that supports the continued success of Irvine communities. The objective of the One Irvine program includes:

- » Enhance the qualities that make Irvine’s villages safe and vibrant
- » Develop community-driven action plans for target areas
- » Stimulate property maintenance and landscaping improvements
- » Reduce long-term cost of City services

Dovetailing with One Irvine, the City operates a Residential Rehabilitation Program that offers low-interest deferred loans and emergency grants to eligible low-income homeowners looking to make critical home improvements. Additionally, in advance of the Neighborhood Action Plan process, the City secured Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to make accessibility upgrades at the local Presley and Willows neighborhood parks. The City also secured CDBG funding for an Energy Efficiency Grant program that could help lower-income neighborhood residents invest in energy-saving enhancements. By saving energy resources, these residents may also see lower utility costs. These existing projects and programs help set the foundation for additional area-specific recommendations described later in Chapter 4 of this document.

After extensive community engagement, the City has produced a Neighborhood Action Plan to enhance stakeholder engagement and partnerships, address specific local issues and opportunities, and identify concrete implementation strategies to help achieve the objectives of One Irvine. The Neighborhood Action Plan encompasses the knowledge gained from the community, and charts a way forward through a series of implementation items that will be carried out by the City’s Neighborhood Services Division.

LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN

NORTH EL CAMINO REAL

NEIGHBORHOOD

As one of the community’s oldest residential neighborhoods, North El Camino Real deserves focused attention to ensure it continues to be a strong part of the City’s neighborhood fabric. The North El Camino Real neighborhood includes approximately 350 acres and generally represents the northern half of Planning Area 11 (El Camino Real). The neighborhood area is bound by Walnut Avenue to the north, the railroad tracks to the south, and Culver Drive to the west. The project area’s eastern boundary is represented by the eastern border of the El Camino Glen housing tract that is located on the east side of Yale Avenue between Walnut Avenue and the train tracks.

Within these boundaries, the North El Camino Real neighborhood includes three single family housing tracts: the Willows, Greentree, and El Camino Glen. The project area does not include the Meadows mobile home community or Walnut Square or areas of Planning Area 11 located north of Walnut Avenue or south of the railroad tracks. While

the Neighborhood Action Plan will address the issues and opportunities of North El Camino Real as a whole, in some cases the Neighborhood Action Plan or future planning direction may refer to one or more of the housing tracts in order to focus attention on a special or unique topic. The graphic on Page 5 illustrates the boundaries and components of the North El Camino Real neighborhood.

The North El Camino Real neighborhood includes approximately 2,000 housing units and is home to 6,500 residents. With easy access to I-5, proximity to community facilities including Irvine’s award-winning public schools and Heritage Community Park, and a range of shopping and dining options at Heritage Plaza, the North El Camino Real neighborhood is a desirable location for people looking to call Irvine home. However, the housing stock is aging, and with it have come challenges to the upkeep and maintenance of the neighborhood.

Table 1: Population, Households, and Household Size Summary, 2016

| | Population | Households | Household Size |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| The Willows | 1,670 | 533 | 3.13 |
| El Camino Glen | 1,900 | 639 | 2.97 |
| Greentree | 2,928 | 870 | 3.37 |
| Neighborhood | 6,498 | 2,042 | 3.18 |
| Irvine | 247,000 | 95,000 | 2.59 |

Source: US Census, American Community Survey, 2016



LAND USE

The North El Camino Real neighborhood is a predominantly single-family residential community complemented by desirable public facilities and easy access to shopping, dining, educational, and employment opportunities at the Heritage Plaza commercial center. In the City of Irvine’s General Plan, the neighborhood is designated as “Medium Density Residential” which allows for 0-10 dwelling units per acre. The neighborhood is currently built-out at an approximate density of 6 dwelling units per acre. The City is currently updating its General Plan, however, given the built-out nature of this project area no land use changes are expected in North El Camino Real. In its Zoning Ordinance, the residential development within the neighborhood planning area is zoned as Low-Density Residential (2.2) and there are two areas zoned as Institutional (6.1), which contain Greentree Elementary, El Camino Real Elementary, and Presley Park.

The neighborhood is primarily surrounded by residential land uses with predominantly Low and Medium Density Residential to the east, south, and west. There is a mix of Medium Density Residential, Community Commercial, Recreation, and Institutional uses to the northeast of the neighborhood which consists of attached single-family housing, Irvine High School, Heritage Community Park, and Heritage Plaza, a local retail

COMMUNITY SIGNAGE



At each entry-point along Walnut avenue, which stretches across the northeastern border of the project area, there are monument signs and wall signs that identify the individual neighborhood name within the project area (see The Willows sample to the left). Many of the monument signs are not highly visible and blend into the surrounding environment. This may contribute to a lack of place-specific identity. There are also no signs that identify the North El Camino Real area as a whole—only signs for the individual housing tracts. Entry-node signage, including monument signs, are important to establish community identity and develop a sense of place. Because the project area is so large, and each individual neighborhood within the project area includes multiple sub-streets, it may be easy for guests to find themselves within one of the neighborhoods and simultaneously have no knowledge of the neighborhood name. Aside from the entry-node signage for the neighborhood, there does not seem to be alternate community identifying signs within the project site that inform guests and community members of the neighborhood identity.

DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

Using census demographic data, planners and researchers can identify trends and key features of neighborhood demographics. These trends can be used to inform outreach strategies and neighborhood improvement techniques. A census demographic analysis was performed for the neighborhood of North El Camino Real to better understand neighborhood dynamics. The results of this analysis are discussed below. It should be noted that demographic data from the U.S. Census is based on census tract block groups, and data for the North El Camino Real Neighborhood is based on the best available corresponding boundaries and data.

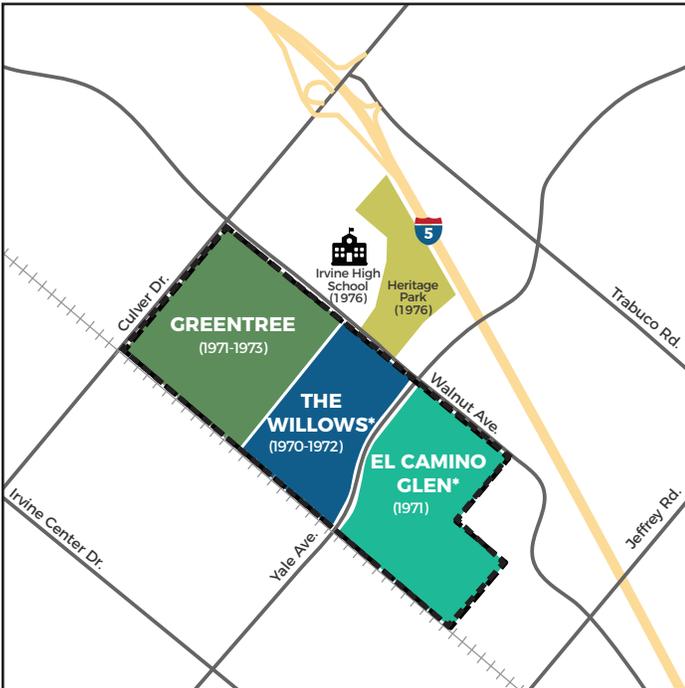
The census data review showed that the neighborhood of North El Camino Real has a population that is older than the general population of Irvine. This may contribute to the overall challenges observed in the neighborhood with the upkeep and maintenance of properties. In addition, the median income in North El Camino Real is lower than the median income for Irvine; this factor may also compound housing maintenance issues within a neighborhood, since residents may have less time, fewer resources, and more limited access to improvement opportunities than the average Irvine resident.

AGE

The North El Camino Real neighborhood has a slightly older demographic as compared to the City. For the North El Camino Real neighborhood, approximately 7% more of the population is within the demographic ages of 45 or older as compared to the City.

NORTH EL CAMINO REAL NEIGHBORHOOD AREA SNAPSHOT

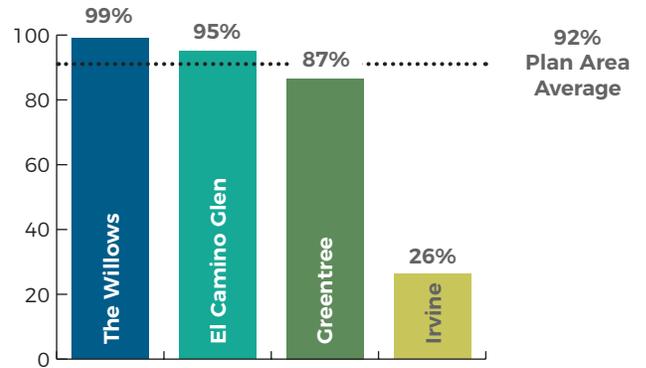
Plan Area



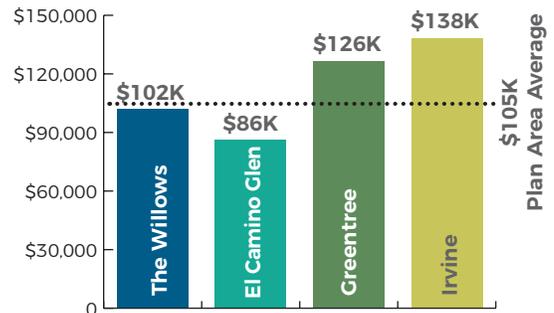
North El Camino Real Neighborhood

* Housing Tracts without a HOA

Housing Stock Age Percentage of Houses Built Before 1980



Household Income Average Median Income



Population & Households Number of Households & Population

| | Population | Households | Average Household Size |
|----------------|------------|------------|------------------------|
| The Willows | 1,670 | 533 | 3.13 |
| El Camino Glen | 1,900 | 639 | 2.97 |
| Greentree | 2,928 | 870 | 3.37 |
| Plan Area | 6,498 | 2,042 | 3.18 |
| Irvine | 247K | 95K | 2.59 |

Residents' Age Median Age of Residents



At the housing tract scale, we see that the Willows has a significantly older demographic population, with approximately 8% more of the population within the demographic bracket of 65 and older as compared to the City of Irvine. Similarly, the percent of the Willows population within the age bracket of 45-64 is approximately 10% higher than the City. It is apparent that the Willows has the oldest population of the three housing tracts in the neighborhood. El Camino Glen has an age structure that is also slightly older than the demographics for Irvine. The average age of Greentree residents is similar to the City average.

Table 2: Age Comparison

| | Greentree | The Willows | El Camino Glen | North El Camino Real Neighborhood | City of Irvine |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Under 18 | 23% | 15% | 17% | 19% | 22% |
| 18-24 | 9% | 13% | 12% | 11% | 13% |
| 25-44 | 29% | 17% | 28% | 26% | 31% |
| 45-64 | 25% | 33% | 26% | 28% | 23% |
| 65+ | 13% | 22% | 17% | 16% | 14% |

Source: US Census, American Community Survey, 2016

Median age is the age that divides a population into two numerically equal groups - that is, half the people are younger than this age and half are older. It is a single index that summarizes the age distribution of a population.

The median age for the updated project area is approximately 41.5 years of age. In comparison, the City of Irvine has a lower median age of 34.5 years of age. The trends in median age data may inform strategies for community engagement and identity-building. Community engagement techniques that appeal to residents who may be slightly older than average Irvine residents can be used to ensure resident participation in development and implementation of the Neighborhood Plan is optimized.

At the individual housing tract scale, Greentree has a fairly consistent median age when compared to the City (36.4 years of age versus 34.5 years of age, respectively). However, there is a notable difference in median age between the Willows, El Camino Glen, and Greentree. The Willows (47.3 years) and El Camino Glen (41 years)—the housing tracts without HOAs—have median ages that are at least 5 years older than that of the Greentree community and more than 6 years older than that of Irvine. In other words, residents living in the housing tracts without HOAs are significantly older than residents living in the local tract with an HOA and older than the residents of Irvine, more broadly.

The presence of older populations within the Willows and El Camino Glen may contribute to deteriorating facades as aging residents may have more difficulty maintaining larger single-family properties. Development of community strategies that consider resident age as it

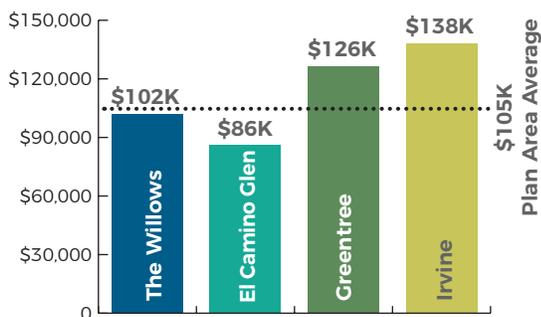
relates to housing upkeep will be useful for the Neighborhood Action Plan. Employing programs that assist the elderly in housing upkeep could prove effective, especially in the Willows and El Camino Glen areas.

INCOME AND HOUSING COST

The median income in the past 12 months adjusted for inflation within the North El Camino Real neighborhood is between \$86,000 and \$126,500, depending on the housing tract. Overall, the median income for the entire neighborhood is approximately \$105,000. This income level is higher than the national average, but \$33,000 lower than the median income in the City of Irvine (\$138,000). Accordingly, monthly housing owner costs for units with a mortgage within the North El Camino Real neighborhood are \$575 lower than the monthly cost average for the City of Irvine, indicating that residents of the neighborhood spend less on housing each month than Irvine residents at-large.



Figure 2: Average Household Median Income, 2016



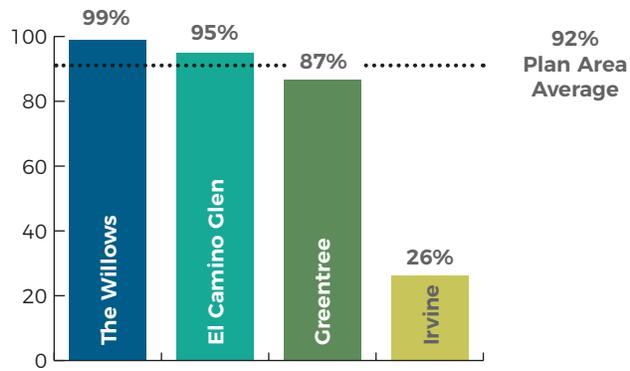
Source: US Census, American Community Survey, 2016

HOUSING STOCK AGE

The age of the housing stock within the project area is significantly older than the age of the housing stock within the broader Irvine area. Of the total housing units within the project area, approximately 92% were built before 1980. In comparison, only 26% of the housing stock within the City of Irvine was built before the year 1980. At the housing tract level, we see that the areas without an HOA (the Willows and El Camino Glen) have a higher percentage of older housing units and fewer rebuilds; 99% of the Willows' housing stock was built before 1980 and 95% of North El Camino Real's housing stock being built before 1980. In comparison, in the Greentree area, only 86% of homes were built before 1980.

It is evident that the project area has significantly older housing than typically found within the City of Irvine. The older housing stock means that homes within the project area may require a higher level of structural and aesthetic upkeep.

Figure 3: Percentage of Houses Built Before 1980



Source: US Census, American Community Survey, 2016

OWNER OCCUPIED UNITS

Of the occupied housing units within the project area, each housing tract had an owner-occupancy rate of at least 72%, with the remaining 28% of units occupied by renters. This information should be utilized to inform community engagement and improvement strategies. Given that approximately one-fourth of all housing units in the project area are renter-occupied and may lack the authorization to make home and yard improvements, the Neighborhood Plan should address strategies for homeowners, landlords, and renters.

HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATIONS

Unlike most single-family Irvine neighborhoods, a majority of the neighborhood of North El Camino Real does not have Home Owners Associations. Greentree is the only neighborhood with a HOA within the project area. The Greentree HOA is a resident group that maintains the unnamed private park within the area. The Greentree Home's Association has worked to keep Greentree properly groomed and well-maintained.

Given that a large part of the North El Camino Real neighborhood is without a resident association, some areas do not have the instruments to address certain property and community maintenance concerns that tend to arise in residential areas.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

Numerous homes in the neighborhood could benefit from landscape and frontage maintenance to resolve existing and pertinent aesthetic issues including: overgrown weeds, broken garages, and dead grass. In addition to overgrown weeds, some homeowners within North El Camino Real inappropriately store trash or old materials on their lawn. The storing of old materials and rubbish on lawns contributes to diminished curb appeal for properties in the neighborhood. The parking of non-operational vehicles in driveways is also evident for numerous homes within North El Camino Real and further diminishes the aesthetic beauty of the neighborhood. These visual blemishes may decrease property values and deter future residents. The City Municipal Code

addresses most of these property maintenance concerns and allows for any violation of the code to be managed through code enforcement.

The City has a code enforcement program in place to address issues related to housing maintenance that violate the Municipal Code. Code Enforcement in Irvine has an “education first” approach which focuses on educating property owners about the code standards in order to prevent and resolve issues. The Neighborhood Services division is responsible for responding to violations related to building, zoning, sign, grading, noise, and encroachment regulations. In order to deal with code violations related to housing, responsible parties are contacted by Neighborhood Services staff and parties are requested to abate the violation. For minor code violations, the City issues citations; a criminal complaint process (including the option for receiverships) is available for significant violations. In order to aid homeowners in keeping their homes safe and up to code, the City also administers a Residential Rehabilitation Program (RRP), which works by offering financial assistance through 3% interest deferred loans and emergency grants to assist low income homeowners with critical home improvements.²

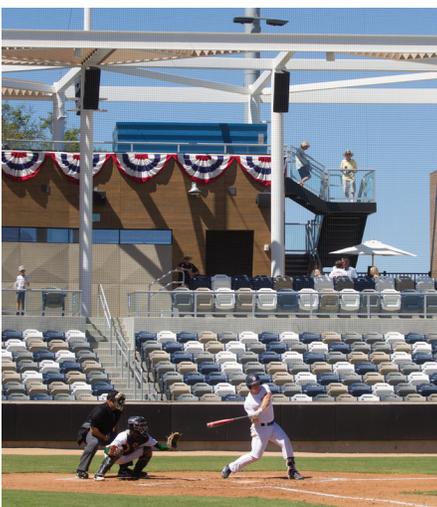
There are multiple code issues that can be observed in the project area. Code enforcement violations that may be especially pertinent within the area include:

- » Municipal Code Section 4-11-301- related to the issue of weeds, rubbish, or other material that may create a nuisance on a parcel.
- » Municipal Code Section 3-35-2- related to wall and fence maintenance outside of a home.
- » Municipal Code Section 3-34-1, Sec 6-3-580, Sec 6-3-57- related to non-operational vehicle storage and maintenance.
- » Municipal Code Section 2-14-2, Sec 3-37-12, Sec 4-6-201, Sec 4-6-207, Sec 3-25-5 - related to the operation of home-based businesses and restrictions on exterior business signage.

OPEN SPACE

There are three parks in the North El Camino Real neighborhood: Willows Park (3.6 acres), Presley Park (2.9 acres), and a private 6.2 acre unnamed park which is operated by the Greentree Homes Association.

Just outside the neighborhood to the northeast is Heritage Community Park, a large City park (approximately 36.5 acres) adjacent to Irvine High School. This special park is home to Heritage Park Community Center, three pools, child play areas, an amphitheater, pond, three lighted soccer fields, 12 lighted tennis courts, three lighted basketball courts, one volleyball court, two lighted racquetball courts, two lighted ball fields, nearly two-dozen barbecues, and outdoor picnic areas.



² City of Irvine Webpage. (2018). City Programs. Accessed September 19, 2018, from cityofirvine.org

A comprehensive planning process is underway to review the current amenities at Heritage Community Park and develop a new master plan to guide future improvements to this important park. The Heritage Community Park Master Plan will include direction for Heritage Community Park, the Irvine Fine Arts Center, Community Center, the Child Care and Youth Services Offices, and Heritage Park Regional Public Library.



The project was subject to a robust public engagement plan that included reaching out to surrounding residential communities, special interest groups, athletic organizations, and other park users. In addition, City staff has worked closely with Irvine Unified School District and Orange County Public Libraries throughout the Heritage Park master planning efforts. Extensive public outreach has helped facilitate development of a comprehensive and inclusive master plan.

WALKABILITY

The built environment impacts the physical activity levels of residents of the surrounding community. One aspect of the built environment that influences physical activity levels is the distance between the home and other neighborhood amenities, including shopping centers, parks, transit, and places of work. If this distance is perceived as “walkable” (safe, pleasant, and distance-appropriate), residents may be more likely and willing to walk to those amenities. A distance of ¼ mile is a commonly cited threshold for how far most people are willing to walk for neighborhood services, while many people are willing to walk up to ½ mile for work or access to regional transit. Many factors contribute to a neighborhood’s real or perceived walkability. Land uses, pedestrian facilities such as lighting and benches, commercial services, urban design, street design, vehicle speeds, and residents’ perceptions of safety, distance, and relative need for goods and services are some indicators that may promote or impede the decision to walk, rather than drive. Residents of higher-density, mixed-use areas make fewer vehicle trips and drive fewer miles than residents of lower-density, more compartmentalized areas.³

Walkscore is one measure for assessing walkability within a community. Walkscore is a metric that is calculated based on access to amenities and proximity to various destinations from a selected location within a community.⁴ Walkscore provides numerical rankings of an area’s walkability on a scale of 0-100. A description of the numerical ranking system is provided below.

- » 90-100: Daily errands do not require a car.
- » 70-89: Most errands can be accomplished on foot.
- » 50-69: Some amenities within walking distance.

³ Crane, R. (2000). *The Influence of Urban Form on Travel: An Interpretive Review*. *Journal of Planning Literature*; 15(1), 3-23.

⁴ Walkscore assessments and methodology are available at walkscore.com. Accessed September 19, 2018.

- » 25-49: A few amenities within walking distance.
- » 0-24: Almost all errands require a car.

Table 3 shows the Walkscore calculated for various areas within and around North El Camino Real. As described above, a Walkscore above 70 indicates that most daily errands can be accomplished on foot, while a Walkscore below 50 indicates that few amenities are within walking distance.

Table 3: Walkability Scores

| Homes at North El Camino Real | Cross Streets | Walk Score |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|
| (1)- House 1 | Brookside Street & Ravenwood St. | 52 |
| (2)- House 2 | Old Mill Street & Deer Park St. | 56 |
| (3)- House 3 | Northpark Circle & Madera St. | 53 |
| (4)- House 4 | Walnut Ave. & Countrywood Lane | 58 |
| Area Intersections | Intersection | Walk Score |
| Intersection 1 | Walnut Ave. & Ravenwood St. | 66 |
| Intersection 2 | Walnut Ave. & Franciscan St. | 72 |
| Intersection 3 | Walnut Ave. & Culver Drive | 75 |

Source: walkscore.com. Accessed September 19, 2018

The results in Table 3 show that areas within and surrounding the neighborhood all have a Walkscore above 50, indicating that there are at least some amenities in walking distance. Additionally, the analysis for the individual intersections adjacent to the neighborhood indicate that once you exit the narrow residential streets, the main roads surrounding the neighborhood generally allow for most errands to be accomplished on foot.

These findings complement evidence collected via neighborhood observations which indicate that many important destinations are located near homes in the North El Camino Real neighborhood with a direct path to get there. Heritage Plaza Shopping Center is located approximately 130 feet (less than a tenth of a mile) from the North El Camino Real neighborhood boundaries and contains a full-service grocery store, a pharmacy and drug store, and a Japanese supermarket for specific grocery needs. These results emphasize the adequacy of the surrounding urban form in the promotion of physical health.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Over the decades, the City’s Community Services Department has developed numerous community events that have established opportunities for residents to come together. These events have become

a part of Irvine tradition and have aided in developing a shared City culture. City-wide community events include the annual Irvine Global Village Festival and the Irvine Fine Arts Center Holiday Faire. A full list of city-wide events can be found online at the City of Irvine Community Services Department website.

At the neighborhood-level, North El Camino Real is home to two local schools: Greentree Elementary and El Camino Real Elementary; El Camino Real Elementary school was closed in 2007, but the campus currently operates as an interim campus for numerous institutions. Both schools have contributed to the family-friendly culture of the residential neighborhood by attracting young families and hosting family-oriented events at local parks and adjacent public areas over the years. Residents have expressed disappointment at the closure of El Camino Real Elementary school, as well as a hope that the site can be actively used again in the future. The adjacent Heritage Community Park, just outside the neighborhood boundaries, has also been home to numerous local resident events including being one of the primary viewing locations for the annual fourth of July fireworks hosted by the City's Police Department.





ONE IRVINE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVES

Preserve and enhance the qualities that make Irvine's villages safe, vibrant, and flourishing with attention initially focused on mature neighborhoods without homeowner associations.

Develop community-driven, action-oriented plans for target areas that establish strategies to strengthen and sustain these neighborhoods into the future.

Launch implementation of neighborhood plans with focused catalytic projects to generate enthusiasm and support among residents and stakeholders.

Stimulate property maintenance and landscaping improvements to strengthen neighborhood vitality, and overall sense of community pride.

Inspire residents to sustain long-term improvements that will decrease calls for Public Safety and Code Enforcement services.

EVALUATE



ESTABLISH
NEIGHBORHOOD
GOALS, VISION, AND
OBJECTIVES

RECORD AND
EVALUATE EXISTING
NEIGHBORHOOD
CONDITIONS

RESEARCH AND
PROFILE NATIONWIDE
BEST PROGRAM
PRACTICES

ENGAGE



CONDUCT
NEIGHBORHOOD SURVEY
TO IDENTIFY ISSUES AND
OPPORTUNITIES

PREPARE
NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN TO
ACHIEVE ESTABLISHED
GOALS, VISION, AND
OBJECTIVES

OBTAIN STAKEHOLDER
SUPPORT FOR
NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

EDUCATE



PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL
MATERIALS TO
RESIDENTS SUCH AS THE
NEW GOOD NEIGHBOR
GUIDE

LAUNCH HOA TRAINING
AND EDUCATION

IDENTIFY AVAILABLE
RESOURCES AND
POTENTIAL PARTNERS

IMPLEMENT



UNDERTAKE A
CATALYTIC PROJECT TO
DEMONSTRATE CITY'S
COMMITMENT TO THE
NEIGHBORHOOD

IMPLEMENT
NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

ADDRESS CODE
ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

REPORT ON
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

CHAPTER 3. COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

This chapter summarizes the community engagement process conducted between May and August of 2019, and highlights feedback received from neighborhood residents.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

As part of the One Irvine program, the City has reached out to residents of North El Camino Real including the neighborhoods of Greentree, The Willows, and El Camino Glen, in a multifaceted outreach program designed to engage community members. The outreach program for this project has been planned to be inclusive, educational, and designed to facilitate a meaningful conversation with the North El Camino Real community about the issues and opportunities that are most important to them. Two pop-up events and an online survey were conducted to provide opportunities for community members to discuss their vision for their neighborhood, issues related to home and yard maintenance, safety, and neighborhood connections.

The One Irvine program will continue to involve numerous opportunities for the public to learn about the program and provide their input, including traditional in-person open houses, online surveys, and a catalytic project. This chapter of the Neighborhood Plan highlights what was discussed at pop-up events held during the Summer of 2019 and an online survey which was completed by over 300 participants.

Information from the community survey was used to understand the neighborhood vision, and craft action-oriented implementation items to address key opportunities within the neighborhood.

NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK PARTY

The Neighborhood Block Party was held Saturday, July 20th at the El Camino Real Elementary School. The event was advertised on social media as well as through a door hanger and direct mail postcard that was sent to each individual residence. It is estimated that between 250-350 individuals came to the Neighborhood Block Party to participate in events, meet their neighbors, visit with City staff, learn about key services, and meet local home and yard maintenance vendors.

A number of key City departments partnered with Neighborhood Services including Public Works, the Police Department, and Code Enforcement. In addition, the Neighborhood Block party was also supported by a number of community partners including the Irvine Ranch Water

Figure 4: Photos from the Neighborhood Block Party and National Night Out



District, Great Park Ecology Center, Energy Upgrade California, Southern California Edison, and Orange County Fire Authority. Vendors that provide home and yard maintenance services also participated in the event.

As part of the Neighborhood Block Party, One Irvine program staff hosted a booth where attendees were given the opportunity to complete a survey and visit with City staff. Participants were also given a Good Neighbor Guide which highlights 10 key ways everyone can be a good neighbor.

The Neighborhood Block Party generated a number of positive comments, and responses to the survey indicated that residents would appreciate similar community events in the future.

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

National Night Out is a nation-wide event that is hosted by City Police Departments. One Irvine hosted a successful booth at the National Night Out event on Tuesday, August 6, at the Ranch, a neighborhood not far from North El Camino Real. There were about 250-350 people who attended National Night Out at the Ranch. While the majority of National Night Out attendees were from the Ranch, a sizable group of North El Camino Real residents were also in attendance.

Staff at the One Irvine booth invited residents to fill out the survey, ask questions, and learn more about the program. While National Night Out was advertised citywide, residents of North El Camino Real were specifically notified about the event through a postcard and door hanger.

National Night served as a valuable opportunity to gather information about the neighborhood, and increase visibility and communication regarding the One Irvine program. Survey results collected during National Night Out were used to compare results from North El Camino Real residents to those of other City residents.

ONLINE SURVEY & SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

At both the Neighborhood Block Party and National Night Out, the One Irvine program conducted a survey to learn more about residents of the study area. This survey included 18 questions that addressed major topics such as sense of community, home and yard maintenance, safety, neighborhood connections, and areas of strength and opportunities for improvement within the neighborhood.

There were 316 surveys collected (as of October 10, 2019) at the Neighborhood Block Party, National Night Out, and through the online survey. 55% of responses came from the El Camino Glen neighborhood (representing almost 6% of their neighborhood); Greentree and the Willows had the lowest response rates with only 1-2% of their respective communities submitting a survey. In addition, 37% of survey respondents came from neighborhoods outside of the study area.

What we heard from the community...

El Camino Neighborhood Survey Results



STRENGTHS TO BUILD ON

Safety



93% Almost all respondents feel safe in their neighborhood.

Feelings About Neighborhood



84% Most respondents feel that their neighborhood is promising, and would recommend it to others.

Care and Effort of Neighbors



71% Nearly three-quarters of respondents felt their neighbors put in significant effort to maintain their home and yard.

Timing on Improvements



60% More than half of respondents are either planning to, or are open to, making needed home improvements within the next 6 months.

Neighborhood Events



88% More than three-fourths of respondents are interested in neighborhood events such as block parties or a community BBQ.

Community Service Projects



41% of respondents are interested in community service projects.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Level of Repair



33% One in three homes requires a moderate to great deal of repairs.

Financial Considerations



59% More than half of respondents haven't made home improvements due to financial considerations.

Vector Control



52% About half of respondents thought pest infestations were a problem in the neighborhood.

Neighborhood Connections



50% Half of respondents knew few to none of their neighbors. Participation in neighborhood events was similarly low.

Exterior & Landscaping Improvements



44% Two out of every five respondents currently needs or will soon need to make exterior, landscaping, or front yard improvements to their home.



STUDY AREA

The feedback we received from the survey points out a number of interesting facts about residents of the study area. Residents of El Camino Glen, the Willows, and Greentree characterized their experience with their neighborhood and their feelings about home and yard maintenance, and issues of safety as follows:

Strengths

Care and Effort of Neighbors. One area of strength that was reflected in Question 13 when residents were asked, “How much care and effort do your neighbors put into the maintenance of their yards and house?”, 71% of residents responded that their neighbors put in a great deal to a moderate amount of effort into their home and yard maintenance.

Safety. Safety is a perceived strength for this neighborhood with 93% of residents responding positively to the question, “Overall, how safe do you feel in this neighborhood?” (Question 14)

Recommend Neighborhood. When asked, “How likely are you to recommend your neighborhood to friends and family looking to live in the City of Irvine?” (Question 16), 78% of residents responded they were either “very likely” or “likely” to recommend their neighborhood.

Promising Future. When asked, “How promising is the future of their neighborhood?” (Question 17), 84% of residents answered favorably that the neighborhood was “extremely promising” to “moderately promising”.

Timing on Improvements. When asked, “Do you plan to make the needed improvements to your home in the next 6 months?” (Question 11), 26% of respondents answered “Yes” while 34% answered, “Unsure”. This seems to indicate that there is a desire to make the needed improvements, but there may be impediments causing the hesitation. This provides the City a clear opportunity. Combined with the “Yes” responses, a full 60% of residents are planning to, or are open to the idea of making improvements in the near future.

Opportunities for Improvement

Neighborhood Connections. When asked, “How many of your neighbors do you know?” (Question 2), the largest response was “a few of them” with 50% of residents knowing few to none of their neighbors. A similar pattern emerged when residents were asked, “How strong is the sense of community in your neighborhood?” (Question 3). Most residents had a neutral attitude (38%), but the “Not at all strong” and the “Not strong” responses (33%) were higher than the positive responses (29%).

Participation in Neighborhood Events. When asked, “Do you currently participate in any of the following activities in the neighborhood?” (Question 4), the highest response was “Garage Sales” at 49%. Other than that, all other activities were in the 20% range or lower with 25% of

residents responding that they did not participate in any neighborhood activities. Some of the written responses listed that activities were held too infrequently, or that no neighborhood events existed in which to participate.

When asked, “If you do not participate in activities in your neighborhood, why not?” (Question 5), 49% of residents responded, “my neighborhood does not have activities,” 16% of residents responded, “the activities do not interest me,” while 12% responded, “I don’t know other participants.”

Out of activities that are of interest to neighborhood residents (Question 6), 67% of residents indicated they were interested in future block or street parties. Other events in which residents were highly interested include neighborhood barbecues (51%), holiday events (48%), garage sales (47%), and community service projects (41%).

Level of Repair. While residents did respond that their homes needed home improvements, when asked, “What level of repairs does your house need?” (Question 9), most responded that their homes either needed a little (41%) or none at all (26%). 23% of homes needed a moderate number of repairs, and only 10% required a lot or a great deal. This indicates that most homes need some repair (74%), but that the level of repairs required is mostly a little to moderate amount.

Exterior Improvements. Exterior improvements remain an item of concern with 44% of residents responding that their house either currently needs or will soon need exterior improvements (Question 7). When asked, “What type of improvements does your house need?” (Question 10), the top responses included landscaping (36%), repaint (33%), driveway/sidewalk improvements (31%), fence improvements (26%), and lawn care (21%).

Landscaping and Front Yard Improvements. Landscaping and front yard improvements are both of concern to residents. When asked, “Does your front yard need improvements?” (Question 8), 38% of residents answered “Yes” or “Not yet, but soon.” Similarly, when asked, “What type of improvements does your house need?” (Question 10), the most frequent answers were landscaping (36%), and lawn care (21%).

Financial Considerations. Question 12 asked, “If you don’t plan to make the needed improvements to your home within the next 6 months ... why would you not make (or have not yet made) the needed improvements?” Residents overwhelmingly responded that it was due to financial considerations (59%), with other reasons (26%), lack of time (24%), lack of technical expertise (14%), physical limitations (11%), and lack of tools and/or resources (10%) also playing a role. Some of the other reasons given include that the resident rents and lacks the money and/or support from the landlord to invest in the property and residents lack the knowledge of who can be trusted/reliable contractors.



Pest Infestations. When asked, “Which of the following topics are problems in your neighborhood?” (Question 15), 52% of residents answered that pest infestations (rats, insects, etc.) were a moderate to major problem in the neighborhood. This is a problem that doesn’t just impact one house, but can easily have adverse effects on the entire street or block.

Absentee Landlords. When asked, “Which of the following topics are problems in your neighborhood?” (Question 15), 44% of residents stated that rental properties with absentee landlords were a moderate to major problem. This sentiment was echoed in the comments received from Question 12. Issues with these properties may include upkeep to the property, and over-parking.



SURVEY RESULTS

Based on the data collected through the survey efforts, the City can better understand how residents of Greentree, The Willows, and El Camino Glen view their neighborhoods, and what should be done to improve conditions. Listed below are the top priorities for residents of all three neighborhood study areas, and items the City can focus on to improve well-being in the neighborhood. These items include:

- » **Helping residents make landscaping and exterior home improvements.** Exterior improvements to homes are a top issue with needed improvements that include landscaping, repainting, driveway/sidewalk improvements, and fence improvements. Landscaping, front yard improvements, and lawn care are all seen as a concern.
- » **Addressing issues of City responsibility.** Some neighborhoods had issues with problems they consider to be City responsibility, such as street, sidewalk, and street light maintenance. They reported that they did not feel empowered to take care of these issues, because they were City property.
- » **Finding economical ways to accomplish home improvements.** Residents want to make upgrades and improvements, but financial considerations pose the largest challenge.
- » **Addressing issues of pest infestation.** Pest infestations, such as rats and insects, are seen as being a big problem in the neighborhood. There are also concerns over neighborhood cleanliness which may be adversely contributing to pest problems.
- » **Encouraging positive landlord and renter behavior.** Rental properties with absentee landlords are seen as an issue within the study area neighborhoods, but were also noted as a major concern by non-study area participants as well. Some of these issues may include a lack of upkeep of the rental properties, short-term rentals, a negative perception of renters versus homeowners, and over-parking and its impact on neighboring homes.



- » **Increasing neighborhood events and building community.** Residents of the neighborhood responded that they didn't know many of their neighbors, but they valued building community connections. The activities that generated the most enthusiasm include block parties, neighborhood BBQs, holiday events, garage sales, and community service projects.

CHAPTER 4. NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN



NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN VISION STATEMENT

Through on-going public engagement with the community, three key themes have arisen.

- » **Theme 1:** Homeowners want to make home improvements, but lack time, knowledge, and/or resources;
- » **Theme 2:** Residents want to be more engaged and have a stronger sense of community identity;
- » **Theme 3:** Residents already love their neighborhood, but there may be ways city can help make it even better.

THEME 1

Homeowners Want to Make Home Improvements, but Lack Time, Knowledge, and/or Resources

Actions the City will take:

1. Implement a nine-month permit fee “holiday” during which time neighborhood residents would be exempt from the permit and plan check fees otherwise required to re-roof a home, replace a water heater, update stucco, or complete other common home maintenance projects. Home remodels that would expand existing living space or add dwelling units would not be eligible for this exemption.
2. Expand the scope of the Community Development Block Grant-funded Energy Efficiency Grant Program to allow for accessibility and aging-in place updates for low-income seniors and residents with disabilities. This comes in direct response to demographic analysis showing a larger percentage of seniors in the local community.
3. Distribute the Good Neighbor Guide to promote neighborhood quality of life.
4. Distribute a Resource Guide describing the kinds of programs and services (like the Residential Rehabilitation Program) that can help residents make home or yard improvements.

5. Host a Neighborhood Cleanup Day. Provide large dumpsters curbside throughout the neighborhood to help residents dispose of unwanted or underused items in their homes, garages, or backyards, including e-waste and old paint.
6. Invite Orange County Vector Control to community events to help educate residents on the dangers of standing water and debris in harboring pests.
7. Reach out to local businesses and corporations to solicit donations of common household tools that can be used during volunteer community service programs.



THEME 2

Residents Want to be More Engaged and Have a Stronger Sense of Community Identity

Actions the City will take:

1. Create opportunities for residents to meet their neighbors while volunteering their time toward neighborhood service projects. Through survey responses, 41% of residents expressed interest in volunteering their time toward neighborhood projects. Volunteers could come together during the Neighborhood Cleanup Day event to help make needed home and yard improvements around the community.
2. Organize a neighborhood revitalization contest focusing on best-maintained and best-landscaped home fronts in North El Camino Real. Work with private companies and outside organizations to find sponsors for prizes. Awards could include titles such as: Most Improved, Best Homefront in Greentree, Best in The Willows, Best in El Camino Glen, or Best Overall. Awards could be nominated by neighbors. The contest could be publicized via social media and other City outlets.
3. Host two additional pop-up events throughout the neighborhood, one targeted for the summer of 2020 and the other for the winter of 2020. These could include neighborhood game or movie nights.
4. Continue working with Irvine Unified School District to activate El Camino Elementary, including shifting compatible City events and activities to that facility.
5. Work to expand and enhance the existing Neighborhood Watch program.

THEME 3

Residents Love Their Neighborhood, but There May Be Ways the City Can Help Make It Even Better

Actions the City will take:

1. Use \$171,166 in approved Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to make accessibility improvements at Presley and Willows Parks and seek additional funding to expand and enhance these projects.
2. Continue to promote the Access Irvine app as a one-stop resource where residents can learn about upcoming community events, engage with City programs, and report graffiti, damaged street signs, or other rare yet notable concerns.
3. Tour the neighborhood with Public Works staff to identify and plan for any necessary sidewalk and/or road maintenance enhancements.
4. Work with Southern California Edison to ensure sufficient street lighting throughout the neighborhood. Through survey results, residents indicated that street lighting may sometimes be a challenge.
5. Enhance Code Enforcement's presence in the neighborhood and enforce observed or reported Municipal Code violations when voluntary compliance efforts are not successful.

CHAPTER 5. MEASURES OF SUCCESS



SHORT-TERM MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

1. At end of project, circulate an additional survey and see increases in satisfaction, community engagement, and perceptions of safety
2. Reduction in visible Municipal Code violations
3. Conducted cleanup day
4. Conducted neighborhood revitalization contests
5. Completed ADA park improvements

LONG-TERM MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

1. Sustained decrease in visible code violations
2. Sustained increase in resident satisfaction



TIMELINE:

The North El Camino Real Neighborhood Action Plan process will be ongoing for 18 months, beginning in spring 2020 and following the outline included below. With this being the first One Irvine neighborhood, the City will learn and evolve as it undertakes this plan. As such, additional projects may emerge based on new opportunities, changed circumstances, or resident feedback.

- » **Spring 2020:** Community Launch Event
- » **Summer 2020:** Neighborhood Pop-Up Event
- » **Fall 2020:** Neighborhood Cleanup Day
- » **Winter 2020:** Neighborhood Pop-Up Event
- » **Spring 2021:** Neighborhood Contest
- » **Summer 2021:** Celebratory Block Party



NEXT STEPS:

As one of Irvine's earliest residential neighborhoods, North El Camino Real has made important contributions to the history and development of our community. North El Camino Real residents love living here and their neighborhood deserves to be recognized.

This Neighborhood Action Plan represents a significant commitment by the City to strengthen and celebrate the North El Camino Real community. Next steps will include a Community Launch event where staff and partner agencies will share available resources. The City will also host an additional block party or similar event to celebrate project successes.

