

**City of Calabasas
Historic Preservation Commission**

RESOLUTION NO. 2024 - 014

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF CALABASAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDING TO THE CALABASAS CITY COUNCIL THAT THE EL CAMINO REAL BELL MARKER, LOCATED AT 23508 CALABASAS ROAD, BE DESIGNATED A LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK.

WHEREAS, the Calabasas character and history are reflected in its cultural, historical, and architectural heritage; and,

WHEREAS, the Cultural Resources Element of the Calabasas General Plan sets forth goals and policies promoting conservation of Calabasas' historic buildings, structures, and districts; and,

WHEREAS, the El Camino Real Bell marker located at 23508 Calabasas Road is considered to be historically significant; and,

WHEREAS, conservation and protection of the El Camino Real Bell marker would foster greater understanding and appreciation of the City's past by present-day and future area residents and visitors;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CALABASAS AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Calabasas has considered all of the evidence submitted into the administrative record which includes, but is not limited to:

1. Agenda reports prepared by the Community Development Department.

2. Staff presentations to the Historic Preservation Commission at the Commission meetings held on February 21, 2024, May 1, 2024, and October 16, 2024;
3. The City of Calabasas Land Use and Development Code, General Plan, and all other applicable regulations and codes.
4. Public testimony and comments, both written and oral, received and/or submitted at or prior to the meeting, supporting and/or opposing the proposal.
5. All related documents received and/or submitted at or prior to the meeting.

SECTION 2. Based on the foregoing evidence, the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Calabasas finds that:

1. A proposal to designate the El Camino Real Bell marker as a local historic landmark was initiated by Community Development Department staff in January 2024, and was presented to the Commission on February 21 and May 5.
2. The Commission requested Staff to return to the Commission with a resolution recommending local designation of the historic marker.
3. Notice of the October 16, 2024 Historic Preservation Commission meeting was posted at Juan Bautista de Anza Park, the Calabasas Tennis and Swim Center, Gelson's market and at Calabasas City Hall.
4. Notice of the October 16, 2024 Historic Preservation Commission meeting was provided to the affected property owner and adjacent property owners as shown on the latest equalized assessment roll.
5. Notice of the October 16, 2024 Historic Preservation Commission meeting included the notice requirements set forth in Government Code Section 65009 (b)(2).

SECTION 3. In view of all of the evidence and based on the foregoing, the Historic Preservation Commission concludes as follows:

The City's Historic Preservation Ordinance (CMC 17.36) requires application of the following designation criterion, and specifies that an eligible resource may be designated a local landmark provided that at least one criterion is satisfied.

1. The resource is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Calabasas' history.

The El Camino Real Bell serves as a physical record of events that shaped California's history because it memorializes the El Camino Real as a network of pathways used by indigenous peoples, and the principal (if not only) means of connecting twenty-one Spanish missions and presidios. The route later became an important stagecoach line used by Mexican and American settlers who formed towns along the corridor. With only a few variations, the route is now the Ventura Freeway (Highway 101). The historic highway is commemorated by a series of mission bell markers along its entire length. Most bell markers found today are later examples placed alongside relocated and widened highway sections, and they do not represent true and accurate locations along the ancient travel route.

Bell markers from the original series of installations are typically found along older roadway segments which were components of the earliest network of California state highways. Surviving original El Camino Real Bell markers like the Calabasas example are rare, especially when the marker remains in the original location.

2. The resource is associated with the lives of persons important to Calabasas' history;

Calabasas was located on the path of El Camino Real and in the middle of Rancho Simi, Rancho Las Virgenes and Rancho Ex Mission De San Fernando. Several Basques played important roles in the history of Calabasas. Indeed, the very name Calabasas is attributed to Antonio Jauregui, a Basque farmer from Oxnard. The story goes that in 1824, Jauregui was transporting a load of pumpkins, or gourds, in a crude horse drawn cart. He was traveling east along El Camino Real toward Los Angeles to sell his produce. Furthermore, The Leonis Adobe (an original 1840 adobe residence which was designated a local historic landmark by the City of Los Angeles) is located on the route -- directly across the street from the Calabasas El Camino Real bell marker. And, similarly, the Kramer Store building (circa 1890) occupies the same property as the historic bell marker. Sometime between 1900 and 1910 the Kramer Store building was moved to this location from Brent's Junction (the west end of the City of Calabasas).

3. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction; represents the work of a master; or possesses high artistic values;

Mrs. A.S.C. Forbes designed the original bell and staff, and final designs were approved in early 1906. Although not installed until 1913, the Calabasas bell marker is considered to be a “first generation” installation because it embodies distinctive characteristics of the original cast iron bells, including the phrase “COPYRIGHTED 1906 BY MRS. A.S.C. FORBES.” Also, based on historic photographs, the historic marker appears to remain in its original location.

4. The resource has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

Ventura Road, formerly part of El Camino Real and now called Calabasas Road, was the main path of travel between Los Angeles and Ventura Counties in the late 19th century. Although Calabasas remained thinly populated, it became a stop for stagecoach lines that generally followed the former route of El Camino Real through Los Angeles County. The location of the El Camino Real Bell in Old Town is a very familiar and established visual feature in the City.

SECTION 4. The foregoing supports preservation of the 111-year-old El Camino Real Bell marker, located at 23508 Calabasas Road, as a local historical landmark. Accordingly, the Calabasas Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends to the Calabasas City Council that the El Camino Real Bell in Old Town Calabasas be designated as Calabasas Local Historic Landmark number 8.

SECTION 5. The City Clerk shall certify to the adoption of this resolution and shall cause the same to be processed in the manner required by law.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 16th day of October, 2024 by the following vote:

Ayes: _____

Nays: _____

Abstained: _____

Michael Heumann, Chair

ATTEST:

Thomas Bartlett, Historic Preservation Officer