Our Investment In History
State Route 163 (SR-163) through Balboa Park is one of only two designated historic parkways in California (the other is SR-110 – the Arroyo Seco Parkway in Los Angeles County). It was opened in 1948 as a portion of U.S. Highway 395, the first highway in San Diego County. It is one of our nation’s most beautiful parkways and serves as the picturesque gateway to Downtown San Diego.

In an effort to preserve the history, the beauty, the environmental significance and investment of tax dollars over the years on this parkway, Caltrans has a landscape restoration project in the works. It focuses on soil treatment, pruning, the removing of dead and dying trees and grasses and replacing them with sustainable, drought-resistant plants and installing more efficient irrigation. The most noticeable part of this project will be the replacement of irrigation and grass in the parkway median.

Preserve, Restore and Sustain
This project stretches nearly three miles from A Street to north of 6th Avenue and calls for an extensive clean up and planting of 23 acres of groundcover (mostly Carpobrotus edulis and Vinca major) and grass. Features include the treatment of soil to help prevent weeds, and the planting of a no mow, native grass in the median.

Irrigation and Being Water Wise
The irrigation system will be replaced with efficient, automated controllers and 24 miles of system lines. This new system will reduce the amount of water used following plant establishment.

Irrigation will be required until the new groundcovers and grass take root -- about three years. Some watering will initially take place during the day for plant and soil monitoring, but gradually it will be reduced over time so the plants survive as drought tolerant.

Status and Cost
The project began construction in April 2014. It is scheduled for completion the end of 2014, followed by the three-year plant establishment. The project cost is $6.72 million from the State Transportation Improvement Program – Interregional Transportation Improvement Program.
Existing Median

Expected Median