

**City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report**

Meeting Date: 05/09/11		Item Number: JC-1	
JOINT CITY COUNCIL/REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD AGENDA ITEM: Approval of Preliminary Plans for West Washington Boulevard AIP Phase III.			
Contact Person/Dept.: Elaine Warner		Phone Number: 310.253.5777	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐		General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☐	Attachments: ☒
Commission Action Required: Yes ☐ No ☒		Date: _____	
Public Notification: (E-Mail) Agenda and Meetings – City Council (05/04/11); (E-Mail) Agenda and Meetings – Redevelopment Agency (05/04/11), (USPS) Property Owners Located Within the Proposed District			
Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld (05/03/11)		Agency General Counsel Approval: Murray Kane (05/04/11) City Attorney Approval: Carol Schwab (by H. Baker) (05/04/11)	
Chief Financial Officer Approval: Jeff Muir (05/04/11)		City Manager/Executive Director Approval: John M. Nachbar (05/04/11)	

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council and the Redevelopment Agency Board (Agency Board) approve conceptual plans for additional landscaped medians along West Washington Boulevard as part of the Area Improvement Plan – Phase III project.

BACKGROUND

In December 2007, the Culver City Redevelopment Agency (Redevelopment Agency) approved a multi-phased Area Improvement Plan (AIP) along West Washington Boulevard to improve the physical and economic quality of the area (Attachment 1). A key component of this AIP involves the installation of landscaped medians funded by the Redevelopment Agency. While the Redevelopment Agency has proposed to fund the improvements, it will only do so if the on-going median maintenance is carried out through an assessment district. The Phase I portion of the plan is complete and maintenance funds are now being collected by the associated assessment district. The Phase II assessment district was approved last year and construction is slated to begin in June 2011.

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DISCUSSION:

The conceptual plans for Phase III include two (2) new medians, totaling 388 linear feet, positioned between Wade Avenue and Boise Avenue along West Washington Boulevard (Attachment 2 and 3). The medians will be located in the center of the right-of-way within existing median striping. The medians will be six feet wide and will be incorporated easily within the street minimizing impacts to traffic flow. The proposed medians will further beautify the commercial area and the planting palette will include drought tolerant Queen Palm trees as the primary species and Burgundy Phormiums, Society Garlic and Blue Oat Grass as the understory planting similar to Phases I and II. Community Development and Public Works Department staff have worked closely with the landscape architect to ensure this configuration and planting palette will not cause any visual blind spots or distractions for vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The understory planting will be maintained at a low level and below sightlines required by California State Law. In addition, two uplights will be positioned near each tree to illuminate them at night and to address median auto safety concerns.

In addition, designs for the rehabilitation of the five existing medians located near Wade Avenue were also developed. These designs highlight a “curved” concept that reflects the line of street and utilizes corten steel panels and fiber optic lighting to accentuate planting. The intent of the design is to rescale the street and open the area into a more vehicular and pedestrian friendly area. Planting in these medians will include many of the specimens in the new medians as well as enhanced planting of Aloe, Cookianum Phormiums, Senecio and Echeveria. The proposed plan includes the removal of the existing palms and replanting broad spreading trees (Attachment 4). Special lighting is also proposed in these medians for aesthetic and safety purposes.

A community meeting to discuss these plans was held on April 28th at Culver West Alexander Park.

Estimated maintenance costs for the medians would be funded by a proposed assessment district of adjacent property owners. The annual cost is currently estimated at \$21,000 and would include maintenance and administrative fees for the two new medians and three of the rehabilitated medians. The remaining two rehabilitated medians will be maintained within the Phase I Assessment District. Assessments are contemplated to be levied on commercial linear feet and building square foot area. A majority vote weighted by proposed assessment amount is required to form the Assessment District. A timeline and details regarding that process is outlined in Attachment 5. As previously noted, construction documents for this project will not be prepared until the assessment district had been formed. If the conceptual plans are approved, an Engineer’s Report will be prepared, per the Resolution of Initiation adopted in September 2010, and brought back in early June.

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FISCAL ANALYSIS:

There is currently funding allocated in tax exempt bond funds for the construction of the two new medians and rehabilitation of the five existing medians.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. West Washington AIP Boundaries
2. Phase III Area Improvement Plan Boundaries
3. New Median Conceptual Plans
4. Existing Median Rehabilitation Conceptual Plans
5. Assessment District Formation Timeline
6. Estimated Construction Budget

MOTIONS:

That the City Council and Agency Board:

Approve the preliminary plans for the West Washington AIP Phase III.