

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

Meeting Date: <u>08/03/10</u>		Item Number: <u>A-1</u>	
PRCS COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM: Consideration of a Recommendation to the City Council to Substitute the London Plane Tree and White Orchid Tree in Lieu of the Tree Recommended in the City's Street Tree Master Plan, the Yew Pine, as Replacement Trees along Sepulveda Boulevard between Culver Boulevard and the City Limit Line South of Franklin Avenue.			
Contact Person/Dept.: Michael Pasternak, Management Analyst and Todd Tipton, Redevelopment Administrator /CDD		Phone Number: (310) 253-5708/5783	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐		General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☐ Attachments: ☒	
Commission Action Required: Yes ☒ No ☐		Date: _____	
Public Notification: (Email) Meetings and Agendas – Parks, Recreation & Community Services Department (07/29/10); (Public Meeting) Business/Property Owners along Sepulveda Boulevard between Culver Boulevard and Franklin Avenue [4300, 4400 and 4500 blocks of Sepulveda Boulevard] (07/14/10).			
Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld/CDD (07/23/10) Pam Robinson (07/27/10)		City Attorney Approval: N/A	
Chief Financial Officer Approval: N/A		City Manager Approval: N/A	
<u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> Staff recommends that the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission consider recommending the substitution of the London Plane Tree and White Orchid Tree in lieu of the tree recommended in the City's Street Tree Master Plan (STMP), the Yew Pine, as replacement trees along Sepulveda Boulevard between Culver Boulevard and the City limit line south of Franklin Avenue. <u>BACKGROUND:</u> The portion of Sepulveda Boulevard between Culver Boulevard and Franklin Avenue is somewhat unique due to the reduced vehicle speeds (caused by the narrow width of the street), neighborhood oriented business composition and access to bus lines and walking/bicycle paths. Due to these factors staff believes the addition of pedestrian oriented amenities would further improve the boulevard by creating an environment conducive to walking, shopping and lingering in the area. In October 2007, the City of Culver City executed a Letter of Agreement ("LOA") with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority ("Metro") for projects programmed through the Metro Call for Projects and State Transportation Improvement Program - Transportation Enhancement ("MTA Grant"). The MTA			

City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report

Grant was awarded in the amount of \$291,000 for pedestrian improvements, which include replacement street trees, pedestrian oriented lighting, new street furniture and crosswalk enhancements. Construction is scheduled to begin during the first quarter of 2011. The project was included in the Redevelopment Agency work plan for 2010 and will be implemented by Redevelopment staff. In accordance with the MTA Grant implementation schedule (Attachment 5) staff is requesting that the PRCS Commission review this item prior to forthcoming discussions on comprehensive revisions to the STMP.

DISCUSSION:

Staff believes planting of a uniform street tree species is one of the most effective ways to improve the area aesthetically. Currently, five species are present and all vary in shape, size and health (Attachment 2). Staff recommends removing the existing trees and replacing them with the recommended London Plane and White Orchid trees (Attachment 3) to harmonize the streetscape design.

To better understand business and property owner concerns, staff conducted a public meeting on July 14, 2010 to receive input on the proposed improvements (including street trees). Owners expressed dissatisfaction with the Boulevard's existing mix of street trees, noting the lack of uniformity across the streetscape and a tendency for trees to block business signage and create maintenance issues with respect to tree trimming, droppings on the sidewalk and root damage. Owners also stressed the importance of selecting a replacement tree that will allow business signage to remain visible from the street.

Culver City is fortunate to have a variety of tree species along its commercial corridors. Unfortunately, the existing street tree species do not always provide the features (shade canopy, compact form, drought tolerance, etc.) needed to create an inviting commercial corridor. To address this, staff from the Community Development Department, Public Works Department, and Parks, Recreation & Community Services Department worked together to establish street tree selection criteria based on:

- Appropriateness to the scale of the street;
- Width of existing sidewalk and pedestrian clearance to ADA requirements;
- Tree maintenance, drought tolerance and resistance to pests;
- Impact on street maintenance budget, root damage potential, and droppings;
- Ability of tree canopy to provide shade for pedestrians; and,
- Compactness of tree form to preserve business signage.

Of the hundreds of species available, staff identified six street trees they believe suitable for commercial corridors.

City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report

Based upon the selection criteria, staff believes the London Plane Tree and White Orchid Tree are best suited for this area due to their canopy form/transparency/shade properties, hardiness, and growth characteristics. The smaller White Orchid Tree adds further seasonal benefit due to its colorful flowers and scents during its spring bloom.

The Street Tree Master Plan indicates the Yew Pine as the recommended street tree species for this portion of Sepulveda Boulevard. However, the Yew Pine does not provide adequate shading for pedestrians on the sidewalk and occasionally blocks signage due to its dense canopy. Therefore, staff is recommending the substitution of the London Plane Tree and White Orchid Tree in lieu of the Yew Pine as replacement trees on Sepulveda Boulevard between Culver Boulevard and the City limit line south of Franklin Avenue.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

A portion of the MTA Grant award will fund the removal of existing trees in the project area and planting of the London Plane and White Orchid trees. The contract to construct pedestrian improvements and plant replacement trees will go out to bid pursuant to MTA Grant guidelines. The Culver City Redevelopment Agency has budgeted matching grant funds in the fiscal year 2010/2011 and will cover the costs of conceptual design and preliminary engineering. The Public Works Department's street maintenance budget will account for replacement tree care on an ongoing basis.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Project Limits for Sepulveda Boulevard Pedestrian Improvements MTA Grant
- B. Existing Street Tree Species on Sepulveda Boulevard between Culver Boulevard and Franklin Avenue
- C. Recommended Street Tree Species
- D. Streetscape Rendering with Recommended London Plane Street Tree
- E. MTA Grant Implementation Timeline

MOTION:

That the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission:

1. Recommend to the City Council the substitution of the London Plane Tree and White Orchid Tree in lieu of the tree recommended in the City's Street Tree Master Plan (STMP), the Yew Pine, as replacement trees along Sepulveda Boulevard between Culver Boulevard and the City limit line south of Franklin Avenue;

City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report

OR

2. Provide staff with an alternate recommendation;

OR

3. Recommend that the City Council not deviate from the Street Tree Master Plan and therefore maintain the Yew Pine as the street tree replacement species for this portion of Sepulveda Boulevard.