



City of Culver City

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Staff Report

File #: 22-953, **Version:** 1

Item #: A-4.

CC - ACTION ITEM: (1) Approval of a Conceptual Plan to Demolish and Rebuild the Farragut Connector (the “Project”); (2) Approval of a Professional Services Agreement with Linda Endler in an Amount Not-to-Exceed \$49,950 to Prepare and Present Conceptual Plans, Create Construction/Bid Documents and to Supervise the Project’s Construction; and (3) Authorize the Publication of a Notice Inviting Bids for the Construction of the Project.

Meeting Date: June 27, 2022

Contact Person/Dept: Joe Susca, Public Works-Administration
Phone Number: 310-253-5636

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐

General Fund: Yes ☒ No ☐

Attachments: Yes ☒ No ☐

Commission Action Required: Yes ☐ No ☒

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (06/22/2022); the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (06/08/2022); those residents in the neighborhood who attended the January 27, 2022 community meeting held on this topic (06/08/2022); the owners of the 4201 and 4203 Jackson Avenue properties, which properties abut the Project site (04/27/2022 and 06/08/2022).

Department Approval: Yanni Demitri, Public Works Director / City Engineer (06/06/2022)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council (1) approve a conceptual plan to demolish and rebuild the Farragut Connector (the “Project”); and (2) approve a professional services agreement with Linda Endler in an amount not-to-exceed \$49,950 to prepare two conceptual plans and subsequently present them to the community for review, to refine and develop a final concept using the community’s feedback, to prepare construction and bid documents, and to supervise the Project’s construction; and (3) authorize the publication of a Notice Inviting Bids to competing landscape contractors to construct the Project, CIP No. PS-014.

BACKGROUND

The existing path was built in 1972 and provides Farragut Drive access to pedestrians and walking bicyclists from Jasmine Avenue on one side to Jackson Avenue on the other (the “Farragut

Connector”). The City’s parcel in which the Farragut Connector resides is approximately 25’ wide and 135’ long and is improved with a 10’ wide concrete pad enclosed by a chain link fence, signage, two cobra head streetlights and some trees. The concrete pad is cracked, and the trees are in poor to moderate health, primarily due to the absence of an irrigation system and the severity of recent droughts. (See Attachment No. 1 - Farragut Connector Photographs).

In 2018, the 4201 Jackson Avenue house next door was sold to a developer who demolished it and built a new house in its place. The City and the developer negotiated an agreement to sell a small portion of the City parcel to the developer, which became the backyard of the house (the City’s parcel was “L” shaped at the time; however, after the land sale it became a rectangle). The City and the developer also split the cost to construct a 6’ high concrete wall that now straddles the property line. The wall is jointly owned by the City and the new owner of the house. Approximately 15’ between the concrete wall and the existing path is City-owned property and is primarily undeveloped. Upon viewing the existing site conditions when considering the developer’s offer, the City Council requested staff create a Capital Improvement Project (CIP) to demolish and rebuild the path and to add the Project to a future budget request when funds became available. In the Adjusted Budget for FY 2021/2022, \$50,000 was approved to prepare conceptual and construction documents for the Project. The Proposed Budget for FY 2022/2023 includes \$200,000 to construct the Project.

The Project includes demolition of the existing improvements and construction of a new concrete path, which will be “centered” on the City’s parcel in lieu of abutting the 4203 Jackson Avenue house as it does now. (See Attachment No. 2 -- Farragut Connector Conceptual Plan).

DISCUSSION

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) and Neighborhood Meetings:

On August 18, 2021 and January 27, 2022, respectively, a BPAC meeting and a community meeting (comprised of over 30 neighboring residents and most of the BPAC members) were held to review two different concepts for redevelopment of the site (collectively, the “Community Meetings”). The concepts were prepared by Linda Endler, the City’s Landscape Architect, and following her presentation of the concepts at the Community Meetings, staff received feedback that was used to refine and prepare the final conceptual plan for the City Council’s consideration at its June 27, 2022 meeting.

Responding to the Community Feedback Received:

Meandering vs. Linear Path Design: Although the BPAC favored the meandering path design, the neighbors overwhelmingly preferred the more linear path design as they felt the straighter path and additional width it created would reduce near misses between pedestrians, strollers, wheelchairs, and walking bicyclists. The new path increases the existing width of 10’ to 22’ at both entrances, then varies between 10½’ - 13’ down the middle. The path will also be “centered” within the City parcel’s 25’ width, in lieu of straddling the property line of its 4203 Jackson Avenue neighbor as it does now. A series of three bulb outs (or chicanes) provide traffic calming and encourage bicyclists (who have not dismounted) to slow their speed. A new smooth-surface style of interlocking permeable pavers will be suitable for all users, including wheelchairs, strollers, and joggers. A combined bottle-filler/pet drinking fountain will also be installed.

Landscape and Privacy: To provide privacy for the two adjacent residences, 5' wide landscaped buffers planted with screening trees will line both sides. These landscaped areas, bordered by low concrete curbing, will also contain water-conscious plant species to cover the ground, illuminated bollards and an irrigation system. At each end, a median planted with an accent tree will give the space visual impact and identity as well as help guide traffic around them.

Minimize Dwell Time: The neighborhood residents overwhelmingly wanted to ensure that no “park-like” amenities were included in the design to discourage dwell time. Instead, they prefer users of the path travel from one end to the other without stopping. As a result, proposed benches, bicycle racks, a bulletin board containing fliers and community art postings were removed from the concepts.

Safety: There is a blind corner on the Jasmine side, where many neighbors have experienced near misses with bicyclists. To minimize conflicts and ensure a safer passage, the design will guide users to “stay to the right” as they enter/exit the area through use of signage and pavement markings such as arrows and “Walk Your Bike” and separating each direction with a median containing a large tree. As an additional precautionary measure, mirrors will be installed on the Jasmine side. “No Motorized Vehicles” signage will be mounted at both ends of the path.

A row of locking, removable bollards, spaced 42” to 48” apart, will be installed on the Jackson Avenue side to prevent motor vehicles from entering the path. However, the bollards will be removable to provide easier access to City crews when they perform maintenance activities.

A row of low-level LED-illuminated bollards will be placed along both sides of the path to provide safety and security.

Bike Boulevard Integration: The City’s 2020 Bicycle and Pedestrian Action Plan includes the “Bike Boulevard” project, a bicycle path along Farragut Drive between Overland Ave. and Duquesne Ave. containing signage, pavement markings, traffic calming devices, and ADA curb ramps. Although the details of the Bike Boulevard project have yet to be developed, the Farragut Connector project will include an ADA curb ramp at the Jackson Avenue side for bicycles, wheelchairs, and strollers. Staff submitted a Capital Improvement Project budget request to implement the Bike Boulevard project in the coming fiscal year.

Tribute to Former Speedway History: Many who attended the Community Meetings voiced a desire to include some form of acknowledgement to the area’s previous automobile racetrack history. In 2023, the City’s Cultural Affairs Division will be creating and installing a tribute within the Farragut Connector, whose vicinity is believed to be one of the former entryways and home to a speedway ticket booth. One tribute being studied is painting one or more murals on the smooth concrete wall that separates the City’s property from the 4201 Jackson Avenue residence.

A brief history of the speedway is summarized below:

Jack Prince and Art Pillsbury built the Beverly Hills Speedway in 1919 on 275 acres of land at a cost of \$500,000. The 1.25-mile wood oval, which featured 45-degree banked turns, was funded by a group of actors and others in the industry known as the Beverly Hills Speedway Syndicate. The track was inaugurated on February 28, 1920, but after only four years the 70,000-seat stadium was disassembled to make room for other improvements in the newly

incorporated city of Beverly Hills, holding its last race on February 24, 1924 before a crowd of 85,000. The developers moved the racetrack to Culver City and placed at the intersection of Culver Boulevard and Overland Avenue, right across the street from MGM Studios (now home to Sony Pictures Entertainment). This speedway was built at a time when car races were so popular that there were radio broadcasts from the speedways. The Culver City Speedway operated from December 14, 1924 to March 6, 1927 and appears in the photograph below:



The Request for Bids will include a line-item “optional addition” to replace the existing chain link fence that straddles the path/4203 Jackson Avenue property with a wooden fence that is attached to the existing chain link fence metal posts (which are in good condition and their reuse will reduce cost). If sufficient funds exist, staff will exercise the option to replace the chain link fence with a wooden one that is similar to the existing one that encloses the back yard and wraps around to the path-side of the adjacent 4203 Jackson Avenue house.

Linda Endler Contract for Landscape Architect Services:

Since 2014, Linda Endler has served as a City Landscape Architect consultant for the Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) Department. Her duties typically involve project management and evaluating, documenting, and rendering park and other City-owned landscaped areas under the prior supervision of the former Parks Manager, Patrick Reynolds. Upon Mr. Reynolds’ retirement, the scope of Ms. Endler’s assignments broadened to include some of the landscape architect duties Mr. Reynolds previously performed on an as-needed basis. Under Mr. Reynolds’ direction, Ms. Endler was assigned the task to prepare two conceptual plans for the Project and to present them at the Community Meetings to obtain community feedback. This newest agreement with Linda Endler includes the following scope of work to complete the Project:

- Concepts: Preparation of two conceptual plans for the Project, presentation of the plans to the community at two meetings and, using the community's feedback received, preparation of a final concept for the City Council's consideration.
- Prepare Construction Documents: Taking soil samples and preparation of the following plans: Demolition, utilities, grading, drainage, layout and materials, planting, irrigation, and lighting.
- Bid Documents: Preparation of the scope of work for insertion into the City's Project bid specifications, attendance at a site visit with prospective bidders, work with City staff to evaluate the responsiveness of the bids received.
- Construction Supervision: Oversee all phases of construction by the selected landscape contractor including demolition, surveys, grading/drainage, hardscape, plantings, irrigation, lighting, and site amenities.

(See Attachment No. 3 -- Linda Endler Proposal)

Pursuant to Culver City Municipal Code Section 3.07.065.A, professional services are exempt from competitive bidding requirements, provided the contract is based upon competitive quotations, whenever practical, as determined by the City Manager. Ms. Endler has already completed substantial work involved with this Project under her current agreement for as-needed services. To ensure continuity of the Project, it has been determined competitive quotations would not be practical in this case.

Next Steps

If the City Council approves the Project to move forward, staff will proceed to have detailed construction and bid documents prepared and will publish a Notice Inviting Bids to competing landscape contractors later this Summer. Staff will return to the City Council this Fall with a recommendation to select a landscape contractor to construct the Project.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

Sufficient funds exist to cover the Linda Endler contract in the amount of \$49,950 in Account No. 42080000.619800 (CIP PS-014 -- *Jackson Avenue Pedestrian Walkway Renovation*), which contains \$50,000 in the Adjusted Budget for FY 2021/2022 to prepare conceptual plans and construction documents. The Proposed Budget for FY 2022/2023 includes \$200,000 in FY 2022/23 to construct the Project.

If funds remain in CIP PS-014 after construction is completed, all or a portion of those remaining funds will be used to create and install the tribute to the area's racetrack history.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 2022_06_27 ATT 1 Farragut Connector Photographs
2. 2022_06_27 ATT 2 Farragut Connector Conceptual Plan
3. 2022_06_27 ATT 3 Linda Endler Proposal

MOTIONS

That the City Council:

1. Approve a Conceptual Plan for the Farragut Connector Project; and
2. Approve a professional services agreement with Linda Endler in an amount not-to-exceed \$49,950 to prepare/present conceptual plans, create construction/bid documents and supervise construction of the Farragut Connector Project; and
3. Authorize the City Attorney to review/prepare the necessary documents; and
4. Authorize the City Manager to execute such documents on behalf of the City; and
5. Authorize the publication of a Notice Inviting Bids to competing Landscape Contractors to construct the Farragut Connector Project.