

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

Meeting Date: 08/23/10		Item Number: <u>J-X</u>	
JOINT CITY COUNCIL/REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY BOARD AGENDA ITEM: (1) Amendment of the Street Tree Master Plan for that Portion of Sepulveda Boulevard between Culver Boulevard and the City Limit Line South of Franklin Avenue as Recommended by the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission; and (2) Redevelopment Agency Board Approval of the Conceptual Design Plans, and Authorization to Prepare Bid Documents for the Sepulveda Boulevard MTA Grant Project.			
Contact Person/Dept.: Michael Pasternak/CDD Todd Tipton/CDD		Phone Number: (310) 253-5708 and 5783	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐		General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☒ Attachments: ☒	
Commission Action Required: Yes ☒ No ☐ Date: 08/03/2010 Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission			
Public Notification: (USPS) All Property Owners, Businesses and Occupants within 500 feet of the Project Area (08/11/10); (Email) Meetings and Agendas – City Council (08/18/10), Meetings and Agendas - Redevelopment Agency (08/18/10); (Public Meeting) Business/Property Owners along Sepulveda Boulevard between Culver Boulevard and city limit line south of Franklin Avenue (07/14/10 & 08/04/10)			
Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld (8/17/10)		City Attorney Approval: Carol Schwab (by H. Baker) (08/18/10) Agency General Counsel Approval: Murray Kane: (08/16/10)	
Chief Financial Officer Approval: Jeff Muir (by N. Kimball) (08/18/10)		City Manager/Executive Director Approval: John M. Nachbar (08/18/10)	
<u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> Staff recommends the City Council amend the Street Tree Master Plan for that portion of Sepulveda Boulevard between Culver Boulevard and the City limit line south of Franklin Avenue as recommended by the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission; AND Staff recommends the Culver City Redevelopment Agency Board (Board): (1) Approve the conceptual design plans for the Sepulveda Boulevard MTA Grant Project; and, (2) Authorize the preparation of construction bid documents for the Sepulveda Boulevard MTA Grant Project.			

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BACKGROUND:

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 Grant was awarded in the amount of \$291,000 for pedestrian improvements (P-797), which include replacement street trees, pedestrian oriented lighting, new street furniture and crosswalk enhancements.

The MTA Grant will fund improvements along Sepulveda Boulevard from the Culver Boulevard intersection to the City limit line south of Franklin Avenue. The project was included in the Redevelopment Agency work plan for Fiscal Year 2010/2011 and will be implemented by staff. The design and implementation process (Attachment 6) is similar to the West Washington Boulevard Area Improvement Plan (AIP) and will likewise improve the physical and economic quality of the area. Similar programming related to façade improvements can also be implemented in the area but will require budget and work program amendments under separate action by the Board.

In June 2010, an administrative agreement was executed with Lorcan O'Herlihy Architects to develop the conceptual plans and supervise the overall project design.

On July 14, 2010 a community outreach meeting was held to introduce the project to affected business and property owners and receive input on the proposed improvements (including street tree species). A follow up meeting with the owners was conducted on August 4, 2010 to review conceptual design plans. The plans were well received.

On August 3, 2010, the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission (PRCS Commission) considered recommending an amendment to Street Tree Master Plan (STMP) to replace the Yew Pine with the London Plane Tree and White Orchid Tree as the designated tree species within the project limits. The PRCS Commission voted 4-0 (with one recusal) in favor of recommending the tree species substitution for adoption by the City Council.

DISCUSSION:

The portion of Sepulveda Boulevard between Culver Boulevard and the City limit line south of 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 spending time. The Public Works Department has agreed to incorporate the

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maintenance costs for the project into their ongoing operations. Any improvements beyond the MTA Grant's scope of work would require supplementary Agency funding and establishment of a maintenance assessment district.

The principal element in the conceptual design is the replacement trees. Staff believes the London Plane Tree and White Orchid trees are best suited for this area due to their canopy form/transparency/shade properties, hardiness, and growth characteristics¹. The London Plane will serve as the primary tree species along the boulevard accented by the flowering White Orchid at the crosswalk intersections (Attachment 3). The design calls for trees to be spaced at 26' – 30' intervals to allow for some flexibility in location, which will help minimize intrusion on commercial frontage and preserve sightlines to business signage. The canopies of both tree species will offer shade for pedestrians.

Per the MTA Grant scope of work, additional pedestrian improvements may include:

- Walk-able permeable paving along tree wells that will allow rainwater to infiltrate and roots to expand without damaging the sidewalk.
- Pedestrian benches and trash receptacles. The benches will be installed at the edge of selected tree wells, and will be placed perpendicular to the street and beneath the shade canopy of the trees. The trash receptacles will be placed along the boulevard per Sanitation Division guidelines. The type and number of benches and trash receptacles provided will be determined in cooperation with the Public Works Department. The conceptual plan includes a custom bench. Staff recommends an off-the-shelf product rather than custom design and fabrication of benches and trash receptacles due to the inherent risks in using untested products.
- Mexican feather grass (low maintenance and drought tolerant) planted in the parkway between trees and along crosswalk intersections. The grass will provide an additional landscape accent that defines the sidewalk edge.
- Crosswalk enhancements in the form of decorated paving to improve visibility and pedestrian safety.
- Energy efficient pedestrian oriented lighting, which will improve pedestrian safety at night.

Staff believes this conceptual design honors the intent of the LOA with Metro to improve pedestrian conditions along Sepulveda Boulevard. Further, the design is efficient, low maintenance, and respectful of business store frontage and signage. If implemented, the design will lead to a better organized public space that will benefit business and property owners as well as neighboring residents, business patrons, and bus riders.

If the conceptual design is approved and the preparation of bid specifications authorized by the Board, staff expects to return to the Board in September 2010 for authorization to advertise the bid (in accordance with MTA Grant and City guidelines). In November 2010, staff will return to the Board with a request to select

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a contractor. Should the Board determine to award a contract, staff expects construction to begin in early 2011 and take 6-8 weeks to complete.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

The Board budgeted \$150,000 in Fiscal Year 2010/2011 for the conceptual design, preliminary engineering/bid document preparation, and matching grant funds in the Sepulveda Boulevard MTA Grant Program (55092910 & 57392910). The grant funds are appropriated in the Sepulveda Streetscape Project, (42300797).

The cost for bid document preparation and preliminary engineering is approximately \$30,000; the work will be performed by CBM/KOA pursuant to their existing professional services agreement. Maintenance of trees, trash pick-up, and street furniture will be carried out by the Public Works Department, paid for by funds allocated within the Street Tree Maintenance Program budget (10161600), Refuse Program budget (20267100), and Street Maintenance Program budget (10161100).

ATTACHMENTS:

1. MTA Grant Project Limits
2. Conceptual Plans
3. Concept Illustrations
4. Existing Conditions
5. Project Budget
6. Implementation Schedule

MOTION:

That the City Council:

Amend the Street Tree Master Plan for that portion of Sepulveda Boulevard between Culver Boulevard and the City limit line south of Franklin Avenue as recommended by the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission;

AND

That the Agency Board:

1. Approve the conceptual design plans for the Sepulveda Boulevard MTA Grant Project; and,
2. Authorize staff to prepare bid documents for the Sepulveda Boulevard MTA Grant Project.

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¹ 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 the issue of suitable replacement trees, staff from the Community Development Department, Public Works Department, and Parks, Recreation & Community Services Department worked together to establish street tree selection criteria for commercial boulevards:

- 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 five street trees (including the London Plane and White Orchid) they believe suitable for commercial corridors.