



City of Culver City

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Staff Report

File #: 18-0397, Version: 1

CC - Approval of the Conceptual Plan and Authorization to Release Request for Proposal for the Final Design of the Realignment of Culver Boulevard Project between Sepulveda Boulevard and Elenda Street, PZ-460

Meeting Date: December 11, 2017

Contact Person/Dept: Mate Gaspar/Public Works Department

Phone Number: 310-253-5602

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒

General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒

Public Hearing: ☐ **Action Item:** ☐ **Attachments:** ☐

Commission Action Required: Yes ☐ No ☒ **Date:**

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (12/06/17); Residents south of Washington Boulevard, east of Sepulveda Boulevard, north of Braddock Drive, and west of Elenda Street were notified by letter on (November 6, 2017). Residents and owners south of Washington Boulevard, east of Sepulveda Boulevard, north of Braddock Drive, and west of Elenda Street were notified by letter on (November 28, 2017).

Department Approval: Charles D. Herbertson, Public Works Director/City Engineer (11/28/17)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council approve the conceptual plan and authorize the release of the request for proposal for the final design of the realignment of Culver Boulevard Project between Sepulveda Boulevard and Elenda Street, PZ-460.

BACKGROUND

Culver Boulevard within the project limits is classified as a Primary Arterial in the General Plan Circulation Element with a posted speed limit of 40 miles per hour. Culver Boulevard's configuration west of Elenda Street and east of Sepulveda Boulevard mainly consists of a 50 foot wide main roadway with two lanes in each direction and parking on the south side, a local 50 foot wide roadway known as "little" or "north" Culver Boulevard with one lane in each direction and parking on both sides, a 60 foot wide landscaped bicycle/pedestrian median (formerly Southern Pacific Transportation

Company property) separating the two roadways, and a 10-foot wide parkway each side.

The main roadway is the southern third of the 180 foot wide street right-of-way; “little” Culver Boulevard is in the northern third; and the median constitutes the middle third of the right of way.

In 1980 there were various discussions with the residential community and the City Council on how to improve the future realignment of Culver Boulevard between the 405 freeway and Overland Avenue due to the discontinued use of the 60 foot wide Southern Pacific Railroad property. A conceptual Culver Boulevard Urban Design Plan was approved with two way frontage roads on both sides of Culver Boulevard and a wide raised median separating the roadways.

In 1983 the City Council approved the construction for the realignment of Culver Boulevard starting 500 feet west of Elenda Street to Overland Avenue in order to construct a raised median separating the roadways and construct a parking lot adjacent to Vet's Park, Armory, Culver City Community Gardens, American Veteran's Post, Culver City Rock and Mineral Club, and Paddle Tennis Courts.

Later in 1980's the former Culver City Redevelopment Agency (CCRA) condemned the 60-foot wide Southern Pacific Railroad property and began eminent domain proceedings in order to build a bicycle path and landscaped median as part of the Culver Boulevard Improvement Project. Southern Pacific Transportation Company wanted to sell the property for residential development and filed suit against the former CCRA, which ultimately resulted in a settlement in February 1994 with the City purchasing the 60-foot wide property for \$4.75 million with the land remaining zoned for transportation.

In 1993 the City Council approved the application for funds for the Transportation Enhancement Activities Program under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 for the Culver Boulevard Greenway/Bikeway Construction. The City was awarded \$350,000.

In 1995, the City Council appointed a committee of residents and businesses with the charge to devise a consensus plan for Culver Boulevard, west of Elenda Street, that would improve environmental conditions for residents of the south side of the street while minimizing the traffic impacts of the adjacent neighborhoods and businesses, including the residential neighborhood along the north side of the street. It was a consensus at that time that the best available method to improve the environment for those who live along the south side of the street would be to put as much distance as possible between the main flow of traffic and the fronts of the houses.

In February 1996 the City Council approved a motion of the committee's unanimous recommendation to reconfigure Culver Boulevard as follows

A main roadway with two lanes in each direction;

A landscaped median, 24 feet wide, with separate left turn lanes for traffic turning from Culver Boulevard to the cross streets, but with islands that would prevent left turns from the cross streets to Culver Boulevard and would prevent north-south through movements across Culver Boulevard from one leg of a cross street to the other;

A north-side frontage road designed to the standards of a local, residential street with a 35-foot wide roadway providing for travel in both directions and parking on both sides (compared with

the existing 50-foot wide roadway);

A south-side frontage road design to supply convenient access and parking for the residents on the south side with a 23-foot wide roadway providing one eastbound-only lane and parking on only the south side; and

Landscaped islands, approximately 14 feet wide, separating the frontage roads from the main roadway.

At that time it was estimated that the project would cost about \$4 million and funding was not available. The City Council approved a motion that directed staff to seek funding to implement the design and construction of the improvements.

In 1996 the City Council approved the construction of a greenway/bikeway project within the existing unimproved 60 foot wide old Pacific Electric Railroad right of way that the City had recently purchased from the railroad.

On January 21, 1997, the City Council approved a motion that the Culver Boulevard Bikeway be named "The Culver Parkway."

In 1997, as directed by the City Council, a pedestrian traffic signal was installed at the intersection of Culver Boulevard and Huron Avenue.

From 1999 to 2003 Caltrans and the City had multiple meetings with residents about the proposed new 405 freeway off ramp and reconfigured on ramp on Culver Boulevard as part of the 405 freeway HOV and auxiliary lane project. The Caltrans project necessitated the realignment of Culver Boulevard from Sawtelle Boulevard to several hundred feet east of Sepulveda Boulevard in order to accommodate the operation of the 405 freeway ramps. The construction of the 405 freeway project began in 2004 and was completed in 2009. As a result of the Caltrans project, "little" Culver Boulevard was no longer available as a convenient bypass route to the freeway on-ramp.

In 2005 the City received a \$2.2 million Federal Highway Bill earmark for the realignment of Culver Boulevard from Sepulveda Boulevard to Elenda Street and for the widening of Sepulveda Boulevard from Playa Street to Green Valley Circle. In 2011 other mitigation funds were used for the widening of Sepulveda Boulevard and therefore now the entire \$2.2 million is available for Culver Boulevard realignment project.

In 2009 staff submitted a funding request to Los Angeles County Metro Call for Projects for the realignment of Culver Boulevard from Sepulveda Boulevard to Elenda Street. Metro awarded a grant in the amount of \$4 million utilizing Proposition C. This was a second attempt on obtaining these grant funds. The funding became available in 2012.

Staff hired Kimley-Horn through the City Council's approved on-call civil engineering consultant list to prepare a conceptual plan based on past City Council motions in order to receive community input prior to beginning final design.

DISCUSSION

The initial proposal for the Culver Boulevard Realignment Project provided a 20-foot wide frontage

road along the south side of main Culver Boulevard separated from the through eastbound traffic by a 6 foot raised landscaped median. The project also proposed a new traffic signal at Huron Avenue to replace the flashing yellow and red pedestrian signal. There would be left turn lanes for west bound traffic on Culver Boulevard to turn south at both Harter and Huron Avenues. A left turn lane for east bound traffic turning into the cut-out for little Culver Boulevard would also be provided. With the space needed for the frontage road and left turn lanes, the width of the existing landscaped bike/pedestrian path raised median would be reduced from 60 feet to 45 feet.

After the first and second community meetings held on January 21, 2014 and May 20, 2014, respectively, staff analyzed all feedback received including emails and phone calls from residents. These issues, along with staff concerns, were as follows:

- The reduction of the bike/pedestrian path median from 60 feet to 45 feet required the bike path and pedestrian path to be aligned adjacent to one another. The bike path would have 2-4 foot lanes with 2 foot shoulders on each side and the pedestrian path would be 6 feet wide for a total width of 18 feet. This would leave a total of 27 feet for landscaping, 13.5 feet on each side of the two paths. The three main concerns of the reduced area were the safety of bicyclists being near dogs that might be on the pedestrian path; the reduced amount of landscaping that would be replanted; and the viability of providing bio-swales and other rainwater treatment systems.
- The east bound bus stop at Harter Avenue would be placed in the number 2 traffic lane, just west of Harter Avenue, which would not only hinder through traffic but also those vehicles trying to exit the frontage road near the intersection.
- The Harter Avenue intersection would not provide a safe crossing at Culver Boulevard for pedestrians crossing at that point or for the commuters using the west bound bus stop.
- Vehicles entering Culver Boulevard at Harter Avenue would be required to turn right and then make a U-turn at the Huron Avenue traffic signal in order to proceed westbound
- The number 2 west bound traffic lane would shift 31 feet closer to “little” Culver Boulevard on the North.
- The west bound bus stop at Harter Avenue and the U-turn at Huron Avenue would require an additional 10 feet, thereby reducing the bike/pedestrian path landscaped median down to 35 feet.

When all of the aforementioned concerns were taken as a whole, staff determined that a major change to the conceptual layout was needed. The one design item that could be revised which would solve most of the issues was the elimination of the proposed frontage road and the adjacent 6-foot wide raised median. However, the safety of the parked vehicles along the south curb of Culver Boulevard was a major benefit from the frontage road. There would need to be a safety element designed into this change for those parked vehicles. Currently, the distance between the south curb and the first lane stripe is 18 feet. Assuming a standard 8-foot parking lane, this only leaves a 10 foot width of the number 2 lane. When traffic is occupying both the number 1 and number 2 lanes, this pushes the vehicles in the number two lane much closer to the parked cars. This is why there have been incidents of exterior car mirrors being hit and residents feeling unsafe when they exit or enter their vehicles. In order to resolve this matter, staff proposes a 5-foot wide buffer or safety zone

adjacent to the parking lane. With the proposed number 2 lane being designed with a width of 11 feet, this will move vehicles 6 feet further away from the parked cars than under current conditions.

Several additional benefits are realized with the removal of the proposed frontage road. Now with the money saved on the cost to construct a 6-foot wide median along the frontage road, a new traffic signal can be installed at Harter Avenue and allow a left turn lane for motorists. Also, this will provide another controlled crosswalk on Culver Boulevard for pedestrians and bus commuters. Another benefit of removing the proposed conceptual frontage road is that the eastbound bus stop can now be placed in a cutout on Culver Boulevard out of the way of through traffic. Also vehicles parked along the south side of Culver Boulevard can merge into traffic where they are parked rather than at the intersections.

In addition, with this revised plan the bicycle/pedestrian path landscaped median would only be reduced in width by 2 feet to 58 feet. This will allow the separation of the bike path and pedestrian path, provide much more room for landscaping, and be more viable to the installation of bio-swailes and other rain water filtration systems. Also, the number 2 west bound traffic lane would only shift north 14 feet rather than the previously proposed 31 feet. Please refer to the attached Culver Boulevard Realignment Conceptual Plan.

A community meeting was held on October 3, 2017 where the latest conceptual plan layout was presented to the community. There were about 75 attendees at the meeting. Several of the major issues raised by attendees at the community meeting were as follows:

- Save as many of the existing trees as possible during construction.

Staff will work with the design consultant and the community to identify pockets of trees that may be saved. The number of trees disturbed by the project will depend in part on the extent of the companion stormwater infiltration project. Staff will make it clear to the design team that saving as many trees as possible is a priority.

- Concern about traffic noise increasing on “little” Culver Boulevard.

Staff proposes to use asphalt rubber-hot mix in the new roadway which many engineering studies show a reduction of tire noise by 3 to 6 dba.

- Concern that the additional traffic signal on Harter Avenue will slow the traffic on Culver Boulevard.

The proposed traffic signal will improve the efficiency and safety of traffic at this intersection. A motorist turning left from Culver Boulevard can do so using a new proposed left turn lane rather than now having to stop in the number one lane and impeding the flow of traffic from behind. In addition, the new traffic signals will be added to the City's Adaptive Traffic Control system and will be synchronized with other traffic signals on Culver Boulevard.

- Concern that the removal of the existing landscape will cause wild animals to become loose in

the neighborhood.

Staff proposes to require the Contractor hire a wildlife control management company licensed by the California Fish & Wildlife Commission to trap and remove the animals in a humane manner.

- Several property owners and residents on the south side of Culver Boulevard are recommending that the 5 foot wide buffer be increased to a 8 foot wide buffer in order to allow more room for bicyclists that they typically see during construction.

This proposal would reduce the bicycle/pedestrian landscape median by additional 3 feet. Also a 5-foot wide buffer is sufficient space for drivers to enter and exit their parked vehicles. The 5-foot wide buffer can be delineated with raised reflective pavement markers to alert motorists and bicyclists of its presence and discourage bicycle use of the buffer area.

- Replace existing landscaping with drought tolerant landscaping and also that does not attract wild animals.

Staff is proposing several community landscape design workshops. Also, if directed by the City Council, a resident advisory group can be formed consisting of adjacent local residents appointed by the City Council, to meet regularly with staff during the final design process.

Proposed project schedule

Release of the final design RFP in December 2017.

Award of Final Design Contract in February 2018.

Final design and community landscape design workshops April - October 2018.

Approval of final design plans and authorization to advertise for construction bids in November 2018.

Award of construction contract in January 2019.

Start construction in March 2019 and completion March 2020.

Culver Boulevard Stormwater Regional Project, PR-002

The Public Works Department's Environmental Programs and Operations Division (EPO) is proposing a Stormwater Regional Project (Project) that will consist of an infiltration and retention basin to capture stormwater/urban runoff from approximately 334 acres of Culver City drainage area. This Project proposes to utilize this opportunity to construct an infiltration gallery and retention basin underneath the area where the 58 foot wide new bicycle/pedestrian landscape median will be constructed as part of the Culver Boulevard Realignment Project, P-460. A portion of the captured run-off that is proposed to be stored in the underground retention basin will be used to supplement the required irrigation for the proposed landscaping along the raised median and along the Culver Boulevard.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

Staff proposes to exchange the \$2,192,000 Highway SAFETEA-LU funds with Metro in order to avoid administering federal funds which are cumbersome and time consuming. In addition, federal requirements typically increase the construction cost of projects. The exchange amount is \$1,913,000 from the original \$2,192,000. This will be accomplished at a later date.

\$1,913,000 City Funds
\$2,855,776 Prop C grant from Metro
\$1,000,000 West LA College Mitigation Funds
\$960,000 Playa Vista Mitigation Funds

The overall budget is \$6,729,000, including design. The construction cost is estimated to be about \$6,000,000. The design fee is projected to be about \$400,000. Construction management/inspection is estimated to cost about \$300,000.

The contract amount with Kimley-Horn for conceptual plan development, renderings, conceptual landscape mockups, and support at community meetings was \$216,050.

ATTACHMENTS

Culver Boulevard Realignment Conceptual Plan

MOTION

That the City Council:

Approve the conceptual plan and authorize the release of the request for proposal for the final design of the realignment of Culver Boulevard Project between Sepulveda Boulevard and Elenda Street, PZ-460.