



CITY OF COMMERCE AGENDA REPORT

TO: Honorable City Council **Item No. _____**

FROM: City Administrator

SUBJECT: Landscaping Improvements near the I-5 Freeway Ramps along Washington Boulevard

MEETING DATE: May 16, 2017

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council approve or authorize the following actions: (1) Approve the Addendum to the Washington Boulevard Improvement Program EIR; (2) Approve the final landscaping plans; and (3) Authorize staff to proceed with a contract change order for the Washington Boulevard construction project.

BACKGROUND:

Washington Boulevard serves as the east-west arterial between the I-5 and I-710 freeways within the local area. Its regional significance is a key link for goods movement to and from the two major regional ports (Long Beach and Los Angeles), the two major regional rail yards, and also within the City of Commerce, including the Gateway Area in Los Angeles County.

The impact of Washington Boulevard has enabled the City to receive grants and significant funding from Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority as well as a TCIF grant from California Transportation Commission to fund capacity improvements along this corridor important for the movement of goods.

The City, in conjunction with Caltrans, is embarking on the beautification of the I-5 freeway ramps along Washington Boulevard.

ANALYSIS:

As part of the on-going beautification program, the City retained David Volz Design Landscape Architects, Inc. (DVD) to develop landscaping conceptual plans for the I-5 freeway south bound ramp (See Attachment 3). These conceptual plans have been developed and presented to the City's Beautification Committee.

The City is also in the process of executing a landscape maintenance agreement with Caltrans in order for the City to maintain these areas. Caltrans requires a maintenance agreement when a local agency seeks to implement new landscaping, and upon execution of such an agreement, Caltrans allows the improvements to be implemented and maintained by the local agency.

In addition to landscaping the ramps areas, at City's request, staff initiated discussions with Caltrans to plant new trees on the center median island that extends from the southbound ramps to the City boundary. This median was initially a concrete median; however, a new plan showing the planting of trees and landscape in this median has been submitted to Caltrans for its approval (See Attachment 4). Caltrans Permitting has indicated that this area will be added to the final permit to the maintenance agreement that is being executed between the City and Caltrans. Crape Myrtle trees will be planted due to the narrow median, whereby only small caliber trees can be planted per Caltrans standards.

Blodgett & Associates is the environmental consultant that originally developed the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Washington Boulevard project. It reviewed the addition of new landscaping and prepared the attached CEQA document and amendment to the Washington Boulevard EIR, indicating this work is exempt and can be added to the project. The Addendum to the Washington Boulevard Improvement Program EIR is enclosed herewith.

Staff will inquire with Sully Miller (general contractor for the Washington Boulevard project) in order to ascertain costs. Staff will then inform the City Council the final cost amount for this additional work. The current estimate proposed by the landscape architect, DVD, is approximately \$1,000,000, and the City has already allocated \$1,000,000 for the additional landscape work. Staff will then proceed with processing the contract change order.

However, the cost for this work will be funded by the City from the City's share of local funds for the Washington Boulevard Project. If in the event that Caltrans decides that the cost should be paid 100% by City local funds, the funding will be adjusted accordingly.

The construction of landscape improvements is projected to take approximately six months, after the final costs are approved by City Council.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve staff's recommendation
2. Reject staff's recommendation
3. Provide staff with further direction

FISCAL IMPACT:

The proposed activities are being carried out without additional impact on the current operating budget. The project was previously approved and included in the FY 2014/15 Capital Improvement Project Budget. Therefore, the costs are already appropriated and will not require additional budget allocation at this point.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC GOALS:

This item relates to Council's 2016 Strategic Action Plan's:

Infrastructure and Facilities

- Guiding Principle 1 to “establish routine and industry best practice maintenance guidelines to monitor the efficiency and operability of current below and above grade infrastructure and facilities.”
- Guiding Principle 2 to “develop and implement a sustainable Capital Improvement Program to ensure the quality of the existing infrastructure and to support future plans for the City.”
- Guiding Principle 4 to “develop and invest in infrastructure and beautification projects that support economic growth.”

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution
2. Environmental Amendment prepared by Blodgett & Associates
3. Landscape Plans
4. Center Median Tree and Landscape Plan