

MEETING SUMMARY

WESTSIDE MASTER PLAN IMPROVEMENTS 19th Street Community Outreach Meeting November 7, 2013

MEETING PLACE: LYONS PARK COMMUNITY CENTER- City of Costa Mesa

The intent of this meeting was to present responses to comments from the previous community outreach meeting on September 4, 2013 and to gain additional insights and collect feedback from local citizens and businesses along this important corridor. The meeting was attended by about fifty people. Several residents and business owners provided a wide range of input and comment on the proposed improvement project.

Ms. Fariba Fazeli, the city engineer, opened the meeting describing the project history and planning status. The project includes the westernmost end of 19th Street at Marine View Park to Newport Boulevard on the east. She talked briefly about the project funding that comes into effect once the master planning is done. She explained that this meeting, in addition to the first community outreach meeting on September 4, is intended to include community input in the master planning process. Next steps to follow are taking the design plans to the Parks and Recreation department and then city council for additional feedback and approval. She assisted in the presentation by answering questions and concerns posed by the audience. Mr. Ernesto Munoz, public services director for the city, and Mr. Raja Sethuraman, city traffic engineer, also assisted during the presentation to answer questions and concerns.

Mr. David Volz, David Volz Design, presented the project through a slide show of the proposed 19th Street Improvements. He reiterated the design is still a work in progress and seeking additional feedback from the community. He addressed the 19th West Urban Plan (approved by city council in 2006) and the larger vision we are working towards to improve the street with mixed use development and friendly street front environment. Particular aspects mentioned were the goals of working with local businesses to generate open air dining along the street and increasing green space for a more pedestrian friendly experience.

He also referred to the wall display that depicted the planning elements, as well as additional design options generated in response to the first community outreach meeting. He went through the original presentation followed by additional presentation outlining community concerns and responses to those concerns. (Descriptions of these can be found in the meeting notes from September 4, 2013.)

The community participated consistently throughout the presentation. The comments on the following topics are as follows:

1 - Deterring jaywalking in the corridor.

Design option 1 was presented showing fencing and planting in the parkways and medians to deter jaywalking.

Some wondered if the fencing would be tall enough to deter hopping over; but some thought the combination of fencing with planting displaying tough, perhaps spiky texture would be effective in deterring illegal crossing.

2 - Adding more broad-domed trees.

Design option 2 was presented showing broad domed trees mixed in with existing queen palms.

One attendee desired a tree like some she has seen on Del Mar; a Japanese tulip tree.

Another attendee voiced concern regarding the obstruction of sight due to the existing queen palms along the parkway in the commercial areas. It is hard to see oncoming traffic when pulling out of the parking lot, and adding more trees may further obstruct the view.

Mr. Volz clarified that all new tree planting will follow line-of-sight guidelines.

3 - Improved street lighting.

The presentation included a response of extending decorative lighting already at Placentia Avenue further west along 19th Street.

While attendees in general support increased street lighting for safety reasons, some did not like the old-fashioned style of the decorative lighting at Placentia. A couple attendees expressed stronger design coherence; with the implementation of modern signage and modern planting style, new lighting should also reflect the same look and style. Some other attendees like the Placentia decorative lighting.

One attendee would like all new lighting to be Dark Sky lighting fixtures.

4 - Access to driveways in the residential district.

Design option 4 was presented showing shortened planted medians allowing access to nearly all driveways in the residential district.

One attendee liked the choice of using date palms in the medians that have crowns high enough to not obstruct the view of the ocean down 19th Street.

One attendee was still concerned that any planted medians will be too much of an obstruction of driveway access. He uses the existing striped median to back into his own driveway so he can safely drive out head first. He would prefer to have enough space to continue doing this.

Another concern was made over how the planted medians will affect the availability of street parking. Ms. Fazeli and Mr. Sethuraman both confirmed street parking will not be reduced by putting in the planted medians.

5 - The roundabout feature in the residential district.

Design option 5a and 5b were presented which removes the roundabouts, and paves the intersection to match that of Newport Boulevard.

Some attendees were in favor of the original roundabout design and liked the way it was portrayed in the original presentation. One attendee stated she liked how the roundabouts were working in Long Beach.

A couple expressed concern over the feasibility of putting a roundabout in the Monrovia and Whittier intersections, such as the space that would be required for the roundabout to function effectively. Unsure of whether there is currently enough space to accommodate a roundabout, the couple feared imminent domain would consequently be used to take away from their private property. Ms. Fazeli and Mr. Sethuraman assured these residents the city will only be working within the right-of-way and is not going to implement a design that will not work in the given street and right-of-way dimensions.

Suggestions were also made for the roundabout. Since the intersection can be very busy, an attendee suggested using flashing red lights to help direct traffic. Another attendee was curious how pedestrian crossing would be handled at the roundabouts, particularly at night. She suggested more lighting at the roundabouts, such as is presently in the Placentia Avenue intersection, to help pedestrians feel safer crossing the street. Another suggestion was to post an "Entering the Neighborhood" sign to further help slow traffic.

6 - Desire for Traffic Calming and a traffic study.

In general, all attendees are in favor of calming traffic along 19th Street and supported design implementation to attain reduced traffic speed. Many were in strong support of a traffic study, which can be conducted once the design features proposed to slow traffic are implemented.

7 - Pedestrian and Bicycle use along the corridor.

The presentation included plans to put in shared bicycle lanes, and eventual plans to connect to bike trails.

Many attendees expressed concern over the limit of space on 19th Street that currently have pedestrians and bicyclists sharing sidewalk space. One attendee felt current sidewalks at 4' wide are too small, and would like to see more sidewalks at 8' wide.

Implementing a shared bicycle lane in the street is the best option in the given street dimensions, but traffic needs to be slowed for bicyclists to feel safe using the shared lane.

8 - Design Feasibility and further community input.

Concern was raised regarding the feasibility of implementing the proposed design changes. Some felt strongly that they could not decide if they are in favor of the design changes without seeing a more defined plan, with actual measurements that are currently not shown in the conceptual drawings.

Mr. Ernesto Munoz, public services director, reiterated this is a conceptual plan. He assured the attendees that the design concerns heard from the community will be dealt with safely. The community should not see this meeting as being the last time the public will be able to give input in the design process.

Ms. Fazelli invited and encouraged all to continue giving input by emailing the city with thoughts and concerns. She directed attendees on several ways to keep in communication with the city about this

project, and the ample time frame in which to respond before the project gets submitted to the Parks and Recreation department.

9 - Plant palette of the corridor.

Attendees generally were in favor of a planting that

- requires low water,
- that is hardy,
- that deters trampling and crossing over, and
- is slow-growing to minimize maintenance cost

10 - Marina View Park.

Concern was expressed over the safety of accessing Marina View Park. Traffic coming down from Balboa Boulevard, which ends at 19th Street, is extremely fast. One attendee often takes her students to the park, and the nearest crosswalk at Whittier is far and cannot be accessed safely. She would like to see a crosswalk closer to the park and a way to slow down traffic coming from Balboa Boulevard. Another attendee added the crosswalk could use a flashing red light to alert cars.

Mr. Volz responded that there are conceptual design ideas for Marina View Park, including pushing the boundary of the park outward which will lessen the amount of asphalt and encourage drivers to take the turn more slowly. Ms. Fazeli invited the attendee to further share her input on this area of the design after the meeting.

11 - Moniker of “19th West”

One attendee asked if “19th West” was to be the name of the entire project area. He was not convinced it reflected all parts of the street, particularly the neighborhood.

Mr. Volz clarified that “19th West” came into use from the urban plan. Ms. Fazelli confirmed the name is not final, and names for the neighborhood such as West Bluff can be considered.

Other concerns mentioned outside the parameters of the landscape project:

- Changing driveway traffic at the DMV – divert more cars from exiting onto Meyer Place.
- Drainage issues between Monrovia and Whittier.
- Timing of intersection lighting being too brief for safe pedestrian crossing at the Bank of America.
- Putting in sidewalk along the street where there is none. (As this was part of a previous city project, Ms. Fazelli to look more into this.)