



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: May 17, 2004

ITEM NUMBER:

SUBJECT: EAST 17th STREET LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS BETWEEN ORANGE AVENUE AND 500' EAST OF SANTA ANA AVENUE

DATE: MAY 6, 2004

FROM: PUBLIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT - TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIVISION

PRESENTATION BY: WILLIAM J. MORRIS, PUBLIC SERVICES DIRECTOR

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: PETER NAGHAVI, TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
MANAGER, 714-754-5182

RECOMMENDATION:

The Parks and Recreation Commission and staff recommend that City Council:

- 1) Approve the proposed plant palette for parkways and medians on East 17th Street between Orange Avenue and 500' east of Santa Ana Avenue ([Attachment 1](#)); and
- 2) Approve modifications to the Streetscape and Median Development Standards for East 17th Street extending from Newport Boulevard to Irvine Avenue to reflect the new plant palette.

BACKGROUND:

On May 21, 2001, the City Council adopted the Mitigated Negative Declaration for various access and streetscape improvements to East 17th Street extending from Orange Avenue to Irvine Avenue. These improvements included right-turn lanes, bus turn-out and traffic signal improvements at the intersections of Orange Avenue, Santa Ana Avenue, Tustin Avenue and Irvine Avenue, and a new traffic signal at Westminster Avenue. [Attachment 2](#) identifies the geometric layout approved by the City Council. Enhancements to the streetscape and pedestrian facilities along East 17th Street, including landscaped center medians at select locations, were additionally approved. The improvement plan was initiated based on the City Council Goal and Objective 98-B12 to develop pedestrian, traffic flow and streetscape improvements to East 17th Street.

In December of 2002, Transportation staff submitted grant applications to the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) for improvements to East 17th Street, consistent with adopted alignment plan. In May of 2003, OCTA approved separate Measure M grant awards covering 67% of design, right-of-way and construction costs for the East 17th Street/Orange Avenue Intersection Project (including a new traffic signal at Westminster Avenue), and for the East 17th Street/Santa Ana Avenue Intersection Project. The City's 33% share is being funded via other sources.

On September 15, 2003, the City Council awarded the design and right-of-way services contract to Norris-Repke for these projects. On April 28, 2004, the Parks and Recreation Commission received a report on the landscape palette proposed for the East 17th Street intersection improvements, and recommended revisions in tree and plant species to the “Streetscape and Median Development Standards” for City Council consideration.

ANALYSIS:

The proposed plant palette for the East 17th Street project, summarized by [Attachment 1](#), includes plant species selected for their growth habit and/or flowering characteristics, which will enhance the appearance of the corridor and highlight the intersection and parkway improvements. [Attachment 3](#) presents the landscape layout plan reflecting the recommended modifications to the “Streetscape and Median Development Standards” ([Attachment 4](#)) for East 17th Street.

Street trees are proposed to be located at the back of the sidewalk or at back of curb based on the sidewalk widths and building setbacks. Along the existing 4' wide sidewalk areas, the street trees are proposed to be located at the back of the sidewalk to not impact pedestrian pathways and to protect tree branches from damage by large trucks traveling the roadway.

New landscaping is proposed at the back of sidewalk in areas of intersection widening. Landscape materials include hedgerow type shrubs, accent shrubs, street trees, accent trees and relocation of existing palm trees. Areas at back of walk, which currently lack landscaping will be upgraded to provide landscaped planter strips, while continuing the hedgerow shrub treatment for continuity. The proposed location and spacing of the street trees has been designed to minimize any interference with the existing signage and visibility of the businesses along East 17th Street.

The street trees currently designated by “Streetscape and Median Development Standards” for East 17th Street are American Sweetgum/*Liquidambar* ‘Festival’ and ‘Palo Alto’. The proposed street tree, however, is the Crape Myrtle/*Lagerstroemia Fraurei*, as the designated American Sweetgum tree would not be suitable for the narrow planting and growing space available with this project. The Crape Myrtle is a small canopy tree, 30' in height with upright growth and showy flowers. This smaller tree will provide more visibility to the adjacent businesses and better pedestrian scale. A variety of palms align the corridor along various segments, and palms are also proposed with the recommended palette.

The center median trees designated by current “Streetscape and Median Development Standards” for East 17th Street are Sweetgum and Brisbane Box/*Tristania conferta*. These are proposed to be replaced with Crape Myrtle/*Lagerstroemia Fraurei* (Moskogee and Biloxi) and palms of various species due to small median size and narrow width available for planting.

Per the City's "Streetscape and Median Development Standards", median shrubs on East 17th Street are Wheeler's Dwarf Pittosporum/*Pittosporum Wheeleri*, White Indian Hawthorne/*Raphiolepis Indica*, California lilac/*Ceanothus spp.*, Daylilies/*Hemerocallis spp.*, Blue Salvia, Deer Grass. Median ground cover is White Gazania, Ice Plant, with shredded bark mulch. However, the proposed plant list includes New Zealand Flax ('Maori Princess', 'Jack Sprat' and 'Yellow Wave'), Society Garlic, "Crème de Mint" Pittosporum, Lily of the Nile.

The proposed center median landscape differs from the "Streetscape and Median Development Standards" due to reduced median width available for landscaping. The medians will be 10' in total width from curb face to curb face, with a 1' wide concrete maintenance safety strip adjacent to the median curb. The typical 2' shrub setback is proposed to be eliminated to allow shrub plantings to extend to the edge of the concrete safety strip.

The overall landscape effect will be per the Council objective of incorporating more colorful plant materials where possible in City projects.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

- 1) The City Council could decide not to implement the recommended plant palette, and to conform to the approved plant palette for East 17th Street as specified in the "Streetscape and Median Development Standards". This alternative however, has not been recommended by the Parks & Recreation Commission and does not provide for further enhancement of this corridor's landscape.
- 2) The City Council could decide to delete landscape improvements from the East 17th Street project. However, this alternative would obviate the aesthetic enhancements intended to accompany the street improvement project and would be counter to the Goals and Objectives of the City Council.

FISCAL REVIEW:

Funding for design and construction of the proposed project, including the landscape improvements, are included within the FY 03-04 and FY 04-05 budget respectively. The 17th Street/Orange Avenue budget is established from \$705,259 in OCTA Measure M Intersection Improvement Program (IIP) funds; \$347,456 in Trip Fee funding, and \$100,000 in Air Quality Management District funding. The 17th Street/Santa Ana Avenue budget is derived from \$633,959 in OCTA Measure M IIP funds; and \$312,248 in Trip Fee funding.

LEGAL REVIEW:

No legal issues pertain to this item.

CONCLUSION:

Landscape enhancements are proposed in conjunction with roadway and pedestrian access improvements to East 17th Street extending from Orange Avenue to 500' east of Santa Ana Avenue. The proposed landscape improvements vary from the adopted "Streetscape and Median Development Standards" plant palette with the intent to further enhance the aesthetic quality of this corridor, and improve the visibility of adjacent businesses and signs. Therefore it is recommended that the City Council approve the

modifications proposed to the plant palette and the Streetscape and Median Development Standards for East 17th Street.

PETER NAGHAVI, MANAGER
Transportation Services Division

WILLIAM J. MORRIS
Director of Public Services

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ATTACHMENTS: 1 [Recommended Modifications to Streetscape and Median Development Standards for E.17th Street](#)
2 [East 17th Street Adopted Alignment Plan](#)
3 [Proposed Landscape Palette](#)
4 [Existing Streetscape Plant Materials](#)

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