8.0 DEVELOPMENT OF ARTERIAL STREET WALLS, PARKWAYS AND NEIGHBORHOOD ENTRYWAYS

Development and improvements along Costa Mesa's major arterials combine with landscaped parkways, neighborhood entryways, and medians to complete the City's streetscapes. In commercial areas, these edges are largely comprised of landscaped setbacks, parking lots, storefronts, and commercial signs. In residential areas, these edges are largely formed by a variety of walls and fences, which attempt to separate the adjacent neighborhoods from heavily traveled roadways. However, in spite of their importance as a visual edge and buffer, walls and fences in some of the City's residential neighborhoods are deficient in terms of their appearance and noise attenuation effectiveness and neighborhood entryway architectural improvements such as planters and monument signs are in poor condition or have not been constructed.

8.01 Summary of Existing Conditions

Arterial Street Walls:

Walls and fences along major arterials present wide variations in terms of design, materials and maintenance levels within different parts of the City and even within single blocks along the same arterial.

Existing wall conditions range from chain-link fences to slumpstone block walls with generous landscaped setbacks in newer residential development. These fence/wall material inconsistencies are also evident along portions of some arterials where block walls of different materials and heights coexist with similarly varied wood fences. In response to the desire for additional privacy and noise protection, some homeowners may have installed wood, fiberglass or block extensions to the top of their existing walls.

Maintenance levels also vary. However, in addition to the unsightliness of neglected walls and fences, poor maintenance can result in potentially dangerous situations where the structural integrity of the walls and fences adjacent to public sidewalks begin to fail and become hazards to pedestrians. Since all arterial street walls are constructed within private property, responsibility for their maintenance lies with the property owner or homeowner association.

The following list identifies arterial wall locations that qualify under this program as of. JULY 2005:

Adams Avenue from Fairview Road to SANTA ANA RIVER
Baker Street from Newport Freeway to Samar Drive
Fair Drive from Harbor Boulevard to Fairview Road
Fairview Road from Newport Boulevard to Sunflower Avenue
Harbor Boulevard from Newport Boulevard to Sunflower Avenue

Mesa Verde Drive from Adams Avenue to Placentia Avenue.
South Coast Drive from San Leandro Lane to Fairview Road

Neighborhood Entryways:

It is City Council desire to improve the appearance of all the neighborhoods in the City by creating incentives for the construction/reconstruction of entryway amenities. Entryway amenities are defined as a combination of architecturally-designed landscape and hardscape improvements that enhance the theme of each neighborhood (Exhibit D list the recognized neighborhoods in the City). The entryway improvements would be constructed at the intersection of arterial streets bordering the neighborhoods and their primary entrances.

Existing neighborhood entryway improvements vary in construction and state of repair. Some have planters that are not properly irrigated or have walls that have been damaged by overgrown tree roots while others were constructed with architectural features that do not match the motif of the neighborhood.

Arterial Street Parkways:

Existing Parkways along arterial streets throughout the City vary from un-improved areas to beautifully landscaped buffer zones. All new developments are conditioned to beautify all parkway and buffer zones to comply with the latest requirements of Chapter VII. *Landscaping Standards* of the City's Municipal Code. But older developments and those areas bordered by residences (R1 Zone) would remain un-improved if nothing is done. As a result of this, City Council adopted Community Objective 03-B3 which, in summary, provides direction to staff to develop a program for the landscaping of street medians, parkways and neighborhood entryways.

8.02 Summary of Previous Policies

City policies regarding the arterial walls have evolved from the past experiences noted in the previous section and from an increased awareness of the importance of these design features in the overall image of the City's streetscapes and image. Generally, residential developments constructed along major arterials have been designed with six to eight foot high private block walls behind landscaped setbacks ranging from five to twenty-five feet. In the late 1970's and the early 1980's, the City Council approved two amendments to the residential fence standards relating to the height and location of walls or fences adjacent to public streets. The first of these prohibited solid, opaque walls or fences higher than 30 inches within the front 10 feet of residential lots. As many of the new subdivisions do not allow direct access of single-family lots to arterial highways, this limitation impacts relatively few major streets of the City. Another amendment was adopted in 1981 to allow eight (8) foot high block walls for noise attenuation purposes along selected high-traffic arterials. A revised set of

policies were adopted on September 7, 1999, that allowed for the City's participation in the financing of new arterial street block wall that met the program requirements. The last amendment occurred on August 4, 2003, and added the criteria for participating in the re-construction of existing arterial street walls. In addition, this amendment also incorporated the policies and criteria to participate in the Neighborhood Entryway Program.

The City does not have a previously approved set of policies for the upgrading and maintenance of existing arterial street walls. The policies and criteria for the design and participation in this program are now included in the following sections.

These standards have also been revised to include the priority list for landscape improvements for parkways and neighborhood entryways (Exhibit E)

8.03 Public/Private Wall and Neighborhood Entryway Construction Program

The City Council has approved a program, subject to City funding availability, whereby property owners and developers are provided the opportunity to participate financially with the City to construct, reconstruct, upgrade and/or maintain arterial street walls and/or neighborhood entryway improvements along existing residential developments. The program specifics follow.

8.04 Criteria for City Participation in the Design and Construction Costs for Arterial Street Walls and Neighborhood Entryways

In order for the City to evaluate requests from property owners and homeowner associations to participate in the cost of design and construction, reconstruction, upgrade and/or maintenance of arterial street walls and/or neighborhood entryway improvements, policy guidelines or criteria need to be in place to guide City staff. The program criteria is as follows:

City Participation shall be limited to the design and construction, reconstruction, upgrade and/or maintenance of arterial street walls and/or neighborhood entryway improvements in existing residential neighborhoods only, as indicated in the list shown in Section 8.01 and Exhibit D. Exceptions and additions/deletions to this list may be approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission.

City Participation shall be limited to the design and construction, reconstruction, upgrade and/or maintenance of masonry walls where existing homes share a rear or side yard with an arterial street and neighborhood entryway improvements that are located at the corners of the intersection of the arterial street that borders the neighborhood and the primary entrances to the neighborhoods. The proposed locations and exact limits of entryway improvements are to be approved by the Public Services Director.

Priority for City Participation should be given to the design and construction/reconstruction of continuous wall segments and complete entryway improvements along arterial streets.

City funding must be available for allocation in the fiscal year following the year the request for financial participation is made.

Design and construction/reconstruction of block walls shall conform to City Standard PS.111.

8.05 **Financing of Arterial Walls and Neighborhood Entryways**

The City shall contribute fifty (50) percent of the costs to design and construct, reconstruct, upgrade and/or maintain qualifying block walls and neighborhood entryway improvements, contingent upon funding availability.

If the homeowner or homeowners association takes the lead in design and construction, reconstruction, upgrade and or maintenance of the block wall and/or entryway improvement, he/it shall first obtain written approval from the City agreeing to the fifty percent (50%) financial participation and the final design. The City shall pay its share within 35 days of the completion and subsequent approval by the City of the work. If a group of homeowners requests to participate in this program, they must first form a homeowners association that can enter into a binding agreement with the City and, if applicable, must obtain agreements from each affected property owner where the proposed improvements will be constructed.

If the City takes the lead in the design and construction, reconstruction, upgrade and/or maintenance of the arterial wall and/or neighborhood entryway, the City shall first obtain written approval from the property owner/s or homeowners association to enter the property, and a written guarantee of payment of the property owner's or homeowners association's fifty percent (50%) share. The property owners/homeowner associations of adjacent residential lots shall pay fifty percent (50%) of the design and construction cost of eligible arterial street wall segments and/or entryway improvements within 35 days of completion of the work.

The City shall not participate in the cost of constructing walls and/or neighborhood entryway improvements which do not meet the criteria outlined in Section 8.04 and the design standards in Section 8.06.

8.06 **Design Standards for Arterial Street Walls and neighborhood Entryway improvements**

The following standards apply to all cases where arterial street walls and neighborhood entryway improvements are to be constructed along arterial streets, adjacent to residential developments:

Arterial Street Walls

Arterial walls shall be a maximum of eight feet (8') in height, as measured from street grade level, and shall be constructed along the side or rear property line adjacent to arterial streets designated as Primary, Secondary or Major Highways by the City's Master Plan of Highways.

Block walls shall be constructed of slumpstone block at least 6 inches thick and shall be of consistent color and texture (Orco Block -La Paz) or match any existing masonry walls within the immediate street segment.

Brick trim caps are required on all block walls.

Walls adjacent to driveways or intersections shall not restrict visibility at these locations. The standards are mandatory in all cases and shall also comply with the specifications provided for noise attenuation walls under authority of Resolution 81-47 regardless of whether the individual homeowner or homeowners association chooses to request City financial participation or chooses not to construct/reconstruct the arterial street wall.

In areas where the wall will be less than 10' from face of curb, the 5' sidewalk will be placed immediately behind the curb with a planter area of street trees, shrubs and/or vines between the sidewalk and wall. Vines (Creeping Fig and Boston Ivy) will be grown onto the wall to discourage graffiti (see attached City Std. PS.111).

In areas where the wall will be '10' or greater from the face of curb, include a 3 ½' wide landscape parkway immediately adjacent to the curb. The sidewalk shall be 4' in width, with street trees, shrubs and/or vines between the sidewalk and wall.

The reconstruction, upgrade and/or maintenance of existing masonry walls must comply with the most recent edition of the Building Code adopted by the City of Costa Mesa. If an existing masonry wall being considered for financial participation does not meet the minimum requirements established by the building code in effect at the time of the proposed repairs, the proposed improvements must include the necessary work to bring the wall up to code.

The location and architectural features of existing masonry walls being considered for reconstruction, upgrade and/or repair must be approved by the

Public Services Director and the Development Services Director prior to starting the design phase of the project. This step may require the submittal of preliminary layout plans and architectural renderings.

Once the concept plans and location layouts have been approved, final construction documents must be submitted for approval prior to the start of construction. The approval process may require environmental clearances, building code compliance details and calculations, ADA-compliant path of travel improvements, and landscape and irrigation improvements consistent with current City standards.

Building Division and Engineering Division permits are required for all work approved under this program.

Neighborhood Entryways

Design and construction/reconstruction of neighborhood entryway improvements must comply with the latest Public Services Department Standard Drawings and the design parameters, which in the opinion of the Public Services Director and Development Services Director are consistent with the neighborhood's general motif.

The location and architectural features of neighborhood entryway improvements must be approved by the Public Services Director and the Development Services Director prior to starting the design phase of the project. This step may require the submittal of preliminary layout plans and architectural renderings.

Once the concept plans and location layouts have been approved, final construction documents must be submitted for approval prior to the start of construction. The approval process may require environmental clearances, building code compliance details and calculations, ADA-compliant path of travel improvements, and landscape and irrigation improvements consistent with current City standards.

Building Division and Engineering Division permits are required for all work approved under this program.