

TO: City of Newport Beach Parks, Beaches, and Recreation Commission
City of Costa Mesa Parks Commission

FROM: Mark Harmon, Municipal Operations Director, City of Newport Beach
Ernesto Munoz, Interim Director, Public Services Department, City of Costa Mesa

SUBJECT: *Irvine Avenue Median Relandscaping*

Recommendation:

Approve the conceptual design for the landscaping of the Irvine Avenue Medians and recommend approval to the Newport Beach City Council.

Background:

In 2002, the Cities of Costa Mesa and Newport Beach entered into a cooperative agreement for the construction of median improvements on Irvine Avenue between Westcliff Drive/17th Street and Dover Drive/19th Street. In the roughly 2,600 foot stretch, there are seven separate medians. The boundary line on that portion of Irvine Avenue runs roughly along the centerline of the medians.

The 2002 agreement addressed both the construction of the improvements (hardscape, irrigation, and landscape) and the future maintenance responsibilities in the median. Per the agreement, the City of Newport Beach is responsible for the irrigation and maintenance of the median landscape, but invoices the City of Costa Mesa for reimbursement of 50% of the costs each year. Newport Beach is responsible for the funding of the maintenance of the trees on the medians.

Discussion:

In September of this year, 104 Blue Gum eucalyptus (BGE) trees were removed from the median. The remaining landscape on these medians consists of gazania and juniper plants. The current proposal being reviewed is for the reforestation and landscaping of the medians between Westcliff Drive/17th Street and Dover Drive/19th Street.

In October, meetings were held with staff members from the Newport Beach Municipal Operations and Public Works Departments and the Costa Mesa Public Services Department. Working with landscape architect Harry Kobzeff of TCLA, Inc., the staff developed a landscape concept for the medians which include a mix of Date Palms and African Tulip trees, as well as a number of grasses, aloes, and shrubs. These plants have been used elsewhere in Newport Beach and Corona del Mar, most notably on Superior Avenue, Westcliff Drive, East Coast Highway,

and Avocado Avenue. They have been selected because of their heartiness, color, and ease of maintenance. This landscape is also drought tolerant, and will result in reduced water consumption over the median area.

Funding the landscape modifications will be the responsibility of the City of Newport Beach. Following the concurrence of the two Commissions this evening, Mr. Kobzeff will develop construction plans for the landscape work, and the Newport Beach Public Works Department will advertise bids for the project. The tentative timeline has the Newport Beach City Council considering a construction contract in March 2012, with construction starting in April.

Conclusion:

The proposed project will provide a colorful, hearty landscape that is appropriate for the local climate and will require less irrigation than the current plant material. It will be an attractive upgrade that will be a benefit to residents of both communities.