



PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: OCTOBER 24, 2013

ITEM NUMBER: 10f

SUBJECT: STREETScape AND MEDIAN DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

DATE: OCTOBER 9, 2013

FROM: PUBLIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT, MAINTENANCE SERVICES DIVISION

PRESENTATION BY: BRUCE A. HARTLEY, MAINTENANCE SERVICES MANAGER

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RECOMMENDATION

Provide staff direction on revising the Streetscape and Median Development Standards.

BACKGROUND

The Streetscape and Median Development Standards (Standards) were adopted by City Council on September 7, 1999. The Standards represent the adopted "Vision" for the future of the City of Costa Mesa streetscapes. The intent of the document was to adopt an urban design emphasizing an extensive tree and landscaping program within the public rights-of-way, and on private commercial or high density residential properties.

The Streetscape and Median Development Standards were created to meet the goal of providing this special urban design for the City, to enhance recreational opportunities, and to improve and protect the future visual quality of Costa Mesa. Additionally, the City of Costa Mesa has met the requirements for and has the privilege of being designated a "Tree City USA." Consequently, the Standards focus particularly on increasing and improving the inventory of trees in the community. Consideration and attention was given to the preservation and protection of existing healthy trees, especially in the residential parkways. The Standards also encourage the use of appropriate species of canopy trees along the parkways, in the street medians, and in the street setback landscaped area on private commercial, industrial, and residential (multi-family) property. Consistent, yet distinct streetscape corridors were intended to be created through the use of cohesive median and side parkway development along with city-wide standardized street furniture: entry signs, bus benches, street side rest benches, trash receptacles, and specialized furniture.

ANALYSIS

Over the past fourteen years the Standards have been amended twelve times. The amendments dealt primarily with modifying planting palettes on arterial streets or in addressing arterial block wall issues. However, an amendment was also approved at the direction of the City Council to designate the Parks and Recreation Commission to be the final authority on tree removal issues and to make modifications to the Standards without City Council action, thus empowering the Commission with greater decision making authority and reducing the number of appeals necessitating Council action.

Over the past few years, as the Commission addressed unique issues relating to the urban forest and the public rights-of-way, it became apparent that there may be issues that are not adequately or appropriately addressed by the Standards in their current form. This agenda item will provide an opportunity for the Commission, the public and City staff to identify those issues and develop a strategy to focus on resolving the issues determined to be most relevant to present day challenges.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Commission could receive and file the report and provide no direction to staff.

FISCAL REVIEW

There would be no fiscal impact at this time if the Commission provides staff direction.

LEGAL REVIEW

No legal review is required for this item.

CONCLUSION

The Streetscape and Median Development Standards were adopted by City Council fourteen years ago. Since that time they have been amended twelve times; confirming the dynamic nature of the document. The Parks and Recreation Commission and City staff rely upon this document as a guiding policy in regards to many issues affecting the City's urban forest and certain aspects of the public right-of-way. Therefore it is appropriate that the Commission identify and discuss relevant issues in a public setting to determine if there is a need for modifications to be made to the document.


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