

City of Laguna Beach
AGENDA BILL

No. 16
Meeting Date: 02/04/13

SUBJECT: VILLAGE ENTRANCE PROJECT

SUMMARY OF THE MATTER:

On November 12, 2013, the City Council conducted a special workshop to receive input from the community regarding the Village Entrance. At that meeting, following a facilitated conversation, the City Council voted to proceed with a modified concept that does not include a parking structure or require borrowing.

The purpose of this report is to seek City Council direction on specific aspects of the scope of work, confirm a budget and provide a preliminary timeline for the project, and outline important actions that are necessary to advance the project from the conceptual to design phase.

Defining the Scope of Work

The selected project concept, referred to at the November 12 workshop as "Project Concept D," primarily involves beautification of the site through the construction of a landscaped pathway (approximately 30' in total width) extending along the Forest/Laguna Canyon (FLC) parking lot, from Forest Avenue to Tivoli Too.

In addition to a pedestrian and bicycle-friendly pathway connecting downtown to the festivals, the project would provide significant visual screening of the City's surface parking lots from the Laguna Canyon Road view corridor. Further, because the Festival of Arts is currently pursuing improvements to its façade, the City's project offers a unique opportunity to create a consistent landscaping theme on both sides of Laguna Canyon Road at this gateway to the community. In fact, coordination with the Festival is anticipated to be a fundamental component of the City's design process.

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that the City Council:

- I. Receive a presentation from staff regarding the Village Entrance Project; and
- II. Review and consider the list of recommendations on page 7 of this report.

Appropriations Requested: _____

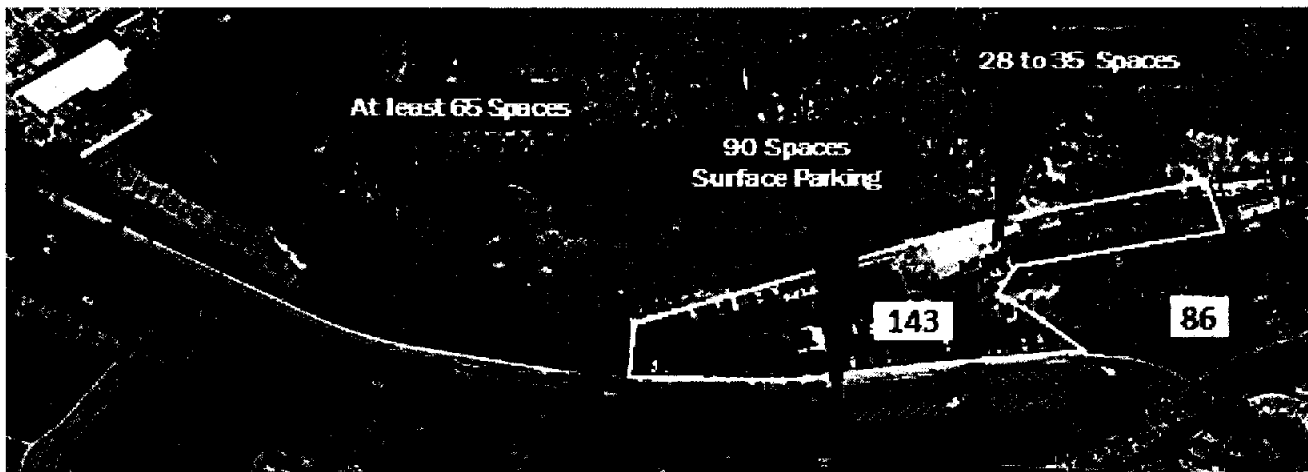
Submitted by: Benjamin Siegel
Ben Siegel, Deputy CM/Dir. of Comm Svcs

Fund: _____

Coordinated with: Gavin Curran
Gavin Curran, Director of Finance & IT

Attachments: Preliminary Project Timeline

Approved: John Pebe
City Manager



Staff estimates that approximately 75 – 80 of the 168 existing parking spaces in the FLC parking lot would be displaced by the landscaped pathway. To satisfy Coastal Commission requirements, the proposed project would replace those parking spaces through the construction of a surface parking lot at the newly-acquired property at 725 Laguna Canyon Road, along with additional surface parking behind City Hall through the relocation of buildings and functions. The property at 725 Laguna Canyon Road is expected to accommodate at least 65 parking spaces, and the area behind City Hall could likely accommodate at least 28 new parking spaces. Consequently, there is anticipated to be no net loss in parking spaces and, depending on the ultimate design of the project, there may be an opportunity for a modest gain in public parking.

While the preceding paragraphs offer a general overview of the modified project concept, staff is seeking City Council direction on several secondary features and design considerations. A determination regarding the following items will allow staff to develop a meaningful scope of work, which is necessary to procure a design team for the project.

- **Sewer Digester Building and Laguna Canyon Road Median:** The historic digester building is currently used for police storage. As part of the prior plan for the Village Entrance, the digester was to be renovated and re-purposed as a visitor center at an estimated cost of \$1.3 million. However, considering the selected concept for the Village Entrance site retains the City Employee Parking Lot, staff does not recommend re-purposing the digester for public use. Rather, staff recommends an exterior renovation to improve the appearance of the building, at an estimated cost of less than \$300,000. Under this alternative, the digester could continue to be used for police storage, avoiding the need to construct additional storage behind City Hall (thus providing 2 – 3 additional surface parking spaces). Further, the savings of approximately \$1 million could be re-directed to advance the improvements to the Laguna Canyon Road median without impacting the overall project budget, as discussed in detail in the following section. Another alternative involves demolishing the digester. Though this option could create about 10 – 13 new surface parking spaces, it would likely require further environmental review given that the certified Environmental Impact Report for the Village Entrance Project retains the digester.

It is also important to note that the digester is a “K - Key” rated structure on the Laguna Beach Historic Register, meaning the structure has strongly maintained its original integrity and demonstrates a particular architectural style or time period. Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, the City Council would be required to adopt a Statement of Overriding Consideration in order to demolish a known historic resource. Considering the potential delays to the Village Entrance project, demolition could always be pursued as part of a separate, standalone effort.

- **Laguna Canyon Road Median Improvements:** The City’s ten-year Capital Improvement Plan includes a project to rehabilitate and re-landscape the Laguna Canyon Road median, between Forest Avenue and 500 ft. north of Canyon Acres Drive. The improvements are expected to consist of replacing landscaping and irrigation, and improving drainage. The project is currently scheduled to begin design in five years, with a preliminary budget of \$1 million. To provide for design consistency with the Village Entrance and Festival of Arts façade project, staff is recommending the City Council advance the Laguna Canyon Road median improvements by re-directing \$1 million of the funds currently set aside for re-purposing the digester building. The Laguna Canyon Road median improvements could be incorporated into the Village Entrance design documents and coordinated with the Festival project with no impact to the overall budget. In addition to ensuring design consistency among the various projects at this community gateway, combining the median improvements with the larger Village Entrance Project is expected to result in an economy of scale and lead to overall cost savings.
- **Surface Parking Behind City Hall, Fuel Island and Car Ports:** As mentioned earlier in this report, the selected project concept would create new surface parking spaces behind City Hall to offset a portion of the displaced parking in the Forest/Laguna Canyon lot. Specifically, through the relocation of temporary trailers, fleet vehicles and storage facilities that currently occupy the area behind City Hall, staff anticipates at least 28 parking spaces could be made available. Staff is in the process of developing a relocation plan that relies on moving these functions to the Recreation Building, Corporation Yard and the recently-purchased professional office building at 479 Ocean Avenue. As part of this process, staff is seeking City Council direction on the existing corrugated metal car ports (adjacent to the Lumberyard parking lot) and the fuel island. Although removal of the fuel island would create approximately seven new parking spaces, staff is recommending it be retained because it supports the emergency generator for the SOCWA lift station, and because it allows for convenient refueling of police vehicles without the need to travel to the Corporation Yard. The car ports are nearing the end of their useful life and are showing significant deterioration. Removal of the car ports – which are largely covered by ivy – would result in a gain of one or two surface parking spaces. Alternatively, the carports have the benefit of screening fleet vehicles from public view. Consequently, if the City Council supports removal of the car ports, staff recommends the installation of additional landscaping along the Lumberyard parking lot to continue to screen the parking area.

A City Council determination on the above items will provide sufficient information to prepare an initial scope of work for the project. There will be many other aesthetic and functional elements of the project

that will be vetted during the design process, including internal circulation within the City parking lots, and whether a new bridge across the channel will be necessary at the Laguna Canyon Road entrance to the Forest/Laguna Canyon parking lot.

Staff has undertaken a preliminary review of a concept put forth by a resident at the November 12 workshop that would connect the Forest/Laguna Canyon parking lot with the proposed surface parking lot at 725 Laguna Canyon Road via a frontage road. Based on staff's preliminary analysis, this concept is cost prohibitive due to the significant amount of hillside grading that it would entail.

Recommendation:

- Proceed with an exterior renovation of the historic digester building.
- Advance the Laguna Canyon Road median improvements to ensure design consistency.
- Retain the fuel island behind City Hall.
- Provide direction on whether to retain or eliminate the car ports adjacent to the Lumberyard lot.

Conceptual Project Budget

The staff presentation at the November 12 workshop indicated a total estimated cost of \$14.4 million for Project Concept D. This estimate included \$6.7 million for the acquisition of the properties at 479 Ocean Avenue (\$1.4 million) and 725 Laguna Canyon Road (\$5.3 million). Subtracting the \$6.7 million in land acquisition costs from the overall \$14.4 million budget leaves \$7.7 million to complete the improvements. At a conceptual level, staff believes this amount to be sufficient to complete the project as currently envisioned, as well as provide some additional flexibility for potential landscaping and circulation improvements to the Employee and Lumberyard parking lots that may be recommended as part of the design process.

The table at right provides a breakdown of preliminary sources and uses. These estimates are very conceptual and will be continually refined as the design process evolves. As discussed in the previous section, the proposed budget *does not* currently include funding for the Laguna Canyon

Concept Budget: Sources & Uses	
Sources:	
Parking Fund	\$7,800,000
Capital Improvement Fund	\$5,000,000
Sewer Fund	\$500,000
Mid-Year Transfer from Parking Fund	\$700,000
Fiscal Year 2014-15 Funding Request	\$400,000
Total	\$14,400,000
Uses:	
Park/Promenade Cost	\$1,500,000
479 Ocean Avenue	\$1,400,000
725 Laguna Canyon Road Acquisition	\$5,300,000
725 Laguna Canyon Road Improvements	\$1,000,000
Historic Digester Renovation	\$1,300,000
Lift Station	\$500,000
Employee/Equipment Relocation	\$1,000,000
Subtotal	\$12,000,000
Design/Engineering/Contingency(20%)	\$2,400,000
Total	\$14,400,000

Road median improvements; however, staff is recommending \$1 million from the digester renovation be re-directed to complete the Laguna Canyon Road median as part of the Village Entrance Project.

Funding for the Village Entrance comes from multiple sources, including the Parking Fund, Capital Improvement Fund and Sewer Fund. Additionally, as part of the Fiscal Year 2013-14 mid-year budget process, \$700,000 in Parking Fund savings was transferred to the Village Entrance Project account. The mid-year transfer increased the total sources to \$14,000,000. Staff anticipates recommending the City Council provide an additional \$400,000 in funding for the Village Entrance Project as part of the Fiscal Year 2014-15 budget to cover the estimated cost without any borrowing.

Recommendation:

- Confirm a target budget of \$14.4 million for the project.
- Re-direct \$1 million in funding originally programmed for the digester renovation to advance the Laguna Canyon Road median improvements.

Project Team Request for Proposals

Once a scope of work is identified, the selection of a qualified design team is the next step in advancing the project. Based on the project concept described in this report, the design team should include a landscape architect, civil engineer and environmental/CEQA professional supported by other technical sub-consultants. The landscape architect will be responsible for the aesthetic features of the project, including the landscaped pathway, potential landscaping additions to the Lumberyard and Employee parking lots and, subject to City Council direction, re-landscaping of the Laguna Canyon Road median.

The civil engineer will manage all other aspects of the project, including, but not limited to, site work, grading, drainage, circulation, access, bridging and coordination with Caltrans. The environmental consultant, working under the civil engineer, will process the Initial Study, oversee any technical studies as required by CEQA, and prepare any additional or amended environmental documents.

In 2011, the City Council certified the EIR for the Village Entrance Project, which, at that time, anticipated a parking structure and full park. Because the proposed concept is less intense than the preferred alternative studied in the EIR, staff does not anticipate that a new EIR will be required. With that said, the environmental consultant will prepare an Initial Study once a conceptual design is substantially complete. The Initial Study, which will include an environmental review of the 725 Laguna Canyon Road property, will identify what changes, if any, to the certified EIR will be necessary based on the modified project concept, and identify mitigation measures.

Staff is recommending the City Council authorize the City Manager to conduct a competitive selection process for the civil engineer/environmental consultant and the landscape architect. This process allows the City to select a consultant on the basis of technical qualifications and experience with similar

projects. Pending approval of the recommended action, staff would develop a scope of work that outlines the roles and responsibilities of the landscape architect and civil engineer. The scope of work would be incorporated into a Request for Proposals (RFP) that would be broadly advertised and distributed. Qualified firms would have the option of submitting a proposal to provide landscape architecture services, civil engineering services, or both. A selection panel would review the proposals, interview top candidates, and provide a recommendation to the City Council.

One of the firms that has been identified as a potential candidate and would be invited to submit a proposal is Spurlock Poirier, the San Diego-based landscape architecture firm working with the Festival of Arts to complete the façade improvements. City staff has been in contact with Andrew Spurlock of Spurlock Poirier, as well as Bob Borthwick, the landscape architect that prepared the concept designs for the full park alternative as part of the Studio One Eleven team. During these conversations, Mr. Spurlock and Mr. Borthwick expressed a desire to collaborate on the project, with Mr. Borthwick serving in a supporting capacity to Spurlock Poirier.

Recommendation:

- Conduct a competitive RFP process to retain the project team.

Preliminary Timeline

Pending City Council direction on the items outlined in this report, staff would immediately begin the process of procuring the project team and undertaking a boundary survey necessary to prepare conceptual plans.

Based on our current understanding of the project, staff has developed a preliminary timeline (attached), highlighting key milestones in the entitlement phase. The schedule provides multiple opportunities for public input as part of the typical design review process.

The proposed schedule anticipates construction beginning in Fall 2016 and finishing in Spring 2018. As with any project, there is always the potential for unforeseen circumstances that could lead to delays. Potential delays could result from coordination with Caltrans on any right-of-way issues, any site remediation determined to be necessary, and other issues that invariably arise during the design process. Further, the preliminary timeline does not assume an appeal of the City-issued Coastal Development Permit (CDP) for the project. As shown in the attached timeline, if the CDP is appealed to the California Coastal Commission, it is assumed that the proposed timeline would be extended by an entire year.

Recommendation:

- Authorize KDM to prepare the first phase of a boundary survey, with a cost of up to \$28,300.

Recommendations and Next Steps

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Authorize the City Manager to:
 - a. Proceed with an exterior renovation of the historic digester building, at an estimated cost of less than \$300,000.
 - b. Re-direct \$1 million in funds programmed for the digester building to advance the Laguna Canyon Road median improvements.
 - c. Retain the fuel island behind City Hall.
2. Provide direction on whether to retain or eliminate the car ports adjacent to the Lumberyard lot. If the car ports are removed, staff recommends the installation of additional landscaping along the Lumberyard lot to screen the parking area.
3. Confirm a target budget of \$14.4 million for the Village Entrance Project.
4. Conduct a competitive RFP process to select a design team, consisting of a landscape architect, civil engineer and environmental consultant.
5. Authorize the City Manager to execute an agreement with KDM to prepare the first phase of a boundary survey, with a cost of up to \$28,300.

Village Entrance Preliminary Timeline

February 4, 2014

Description	Proposed Timeline		Coastal Commission Appeal	
	Start	Finish	Late Start	Late Finish
Request for Proposals/Selection of Consultant Team	February 2014	April 2014		
City Council Award of Design Consultant Team	April 2014			
Conceptual Design	May 2014	October 2014		
City Council Review of Conceptual Design	November 2014			
Design Development Drawings and CEQA Process	December 2014	May 2015		
Planning Commission Design Review	June 2015			
City Council Confirmation of Design Review Action	July 2015			
Coastal Commission Appeal			August 2015	July 2016
Final Design	July 2015	December 2015	July 2016	December 2017
City Council Update/Authorization to Bid	January 2016		January 2017	
City Council Construction Contract Award	March 2016		March 2017	
Phase 1 Construction – 725 LCR, Employee Lot	September 2016	May 2017	September 2017	May 2018
Phase 2 Construction – Landscaped Pathway, Lumbervard Lot	September 2017	May 2018	September 2018	May 2019