

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

DATE: JULY 30, 2007

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF THE SOUTH LAKE AVENUE STREETSCAPE PLAN

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that City Council adopt the South Lake Avenue Streetscape Plan (Attachment 1).

DESIGN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

The Design Commission reviewed the Plan on October 9, 2006 and made three recommendations: (1) that the banner design be simplified, with fewer colors to avoid elements that may be perceived as “kitsch”; (2) that the public art should be integrated with the streetscape plan and used to unify the district and; (3) that selected elements should capture the elegance of mid-century design. All recommendations were accepted by the South Lake Association and as the Plan is developed for installation, those elements will be incorporated for installation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In an effort to continue the revitalization of South Lake Avenue, the South Lake Business Association with support of the City of Pasadena, engaged the Arroyo Group to prepare the South Lake Avenue Streetscape Concept Plan (Attachment 1). Funded by the Association with City assistance, the Plan area encompasses South Lake Avenue from Colorado south to California and recommends replacement Street Trees, Lighting, Furniture, Median Planting and Street Banners.

This Plan, proposed by the South Lake Association, is based on comments and concerns of the South Lake Association constituency – that South Lake needs to compete with other high-end retail destinations and few improvements have been made in the physical street environment. This effort will be partially funded by the South Lake Business Association. Since 1989 South Lake retail transactions

have increased from \$225,000 per year, to over \$2.05 million annually and has become the City's third highest retail generating district following Hastings Village and Old Pasadena.

BACKGROUND:

South Lake History

Until the opening of Bullocks in September of 1947, South Lake was predominantly a residential street. The 1960's and 70's represented major growth years for South Lake Avenue developing retail uses and significantly increasing the professional daytime population. The Bullocks building converted to a Macy's and later, the Shops on Lake Avenue development project was completed to add new restaurant and retail space on the northern and southern sides of the Macy's building.

Process

The South Lake Business Association created the Streetscape Advisory Committee and invited members of City Council, Design Commission, SLBA as well as City Staff to assist with this effort. The consultant team met with the Advisory Committee at several stages of the process: Existing Conditions, Alternatives, and Draft Recommendations. In addition, critical issues were identified through walking tours with several stakeholders.

The agenda of the first three meetings, held in December 2005, was to discuss the overall vision and to identify the elements to be addressed in the Streetscape Concept Plan. This meeting followed a walking tour taken with several key members of the Advisory Committee in October 2005 to present and confirm findings made at that time. At the next meeting held in March 2006, the consultant team presented furniture vocabulary, planting, and lighting alternatives for the Avenue. The final meeting, held in May 2006, refined the Concept Plan recommendations and established a consensus plan prior to submittal to the City for review by various approval bodies.

It is envisioned that the elements along Lake Avenue will be extended to encompass the areas along Shoppers Lane. Those elements are under study, and are aimed at improving the vehicle and pedestrian interface along Shoppers Lane.

Streetscape Plan

Taking its cues from mid-century icons and designs, the South Lake Streetscape proposal seeks to reintroduce elements such as street furniture and pedestrian oriented lighting more in-line with the architectural theme along the South Lake Avenue. As excerpted from the Concept Plan, the plan recommendations include:

1. Provide streetscape amenities along Lake Avenue north of Green Street; consistent street tree planting is especially important.
2. Differentiate the streetscape design vocabulary along Lake Avenue north of Green Street, where office buildings dominate; for instance, street tree planting should be of a stature and formality appropriate to the scale and function of this stretch of the corridor.
3. Make a strong, monumental entry statement at the northern limit of the District.
4. Consider opportunities for more intense pedestrian use of the traffic island at the intersection of Lake Avenue and Del May Boulevard; nonetheless, the treatment should be highly identifiable with public art as a major component.
5. Delineate crosswalks with special paving to communicate that pedestrians are important.

Plan Concept

The textile patterns, graphic art, landscape architecture, and furniture design of the mid-twentieth century are a source of inspiration. These influences are interpreted and adapted to the scale of the street to create a distinct place that has a classic appeal, whimsy and is virtually stunning. The mid-century modern aesthetic shapes the streetscape and influences the street furniture and design.

The streetscape design is intended to enhance the function of the street, and the comfort of pedestrians, while creating an engaging and memorable place. The street furniture, including benches, lighting, trash receptacles, and bicycle racks, etc. reflects that aesthetic and keeps to a classic look and feel, without getting trendy or kitschy. Mid-century textile patterns are interpreted into planting patterns for the medians and islands.

The colors and the materials recommended for the streetscape elements are also inspired by the mid-century aesthetic. Silver is established as the District color for street furniture and the gray-green and blue-green colors of the plant palette and echo the popular Formica and fabric of the era.

South Lake Avenue's pinnacle of commercial success was reached in the 1950's and 1960's; and a return to the aesthetic of that era can signal revitalization and the success of that time.

Excluded Elements

An element that has been excluded from the plan is the colored cut concrete intersection paving or intersection activation at Del Mar, items four and five above. It is the position of the South Lake District, Staff and Consultant that the paving treatments as presented represent a long term maintenance challenge. Should the street need to be opened for any utility upgrade, repair or other purpose, the treatment will not be able to be replicated therefore it is not recommended for inclusion. Additionally, Del Mar is identified as a carrier

corridor through the City's Transportation Element, and to place significant pedestrian activity on the islands would be unsafe.

FUNDING PLAN:

Implementation of the South Lake Streetscape plan is an important step in the revitalization of South Lake and helps ensure the continued vibrancy along the Avenue. Consultant project costs are estimated to be \$2.6 million. Staff will review the Plan's projected costs for accuracy and adopt an amended amount using City costs prior to inclusion in the Capital Improvement Program.

Funding for the Plan will come from several funding sources including the South Lake Association, the South Lake Parking Meter Zone income

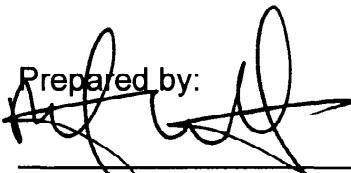
FISCAL IMPACT:

Council appropriated \$700,000 in Fiscal Year 2008 for the South Lake Streetscapes Improvement (Project 73706) to begin design and preparation of construction documents for the first phase, \$200,000 of which is to be funded by the South Lake Association. Staff will review the Plan's overall projected costs for accuracy and amend the Capital Improvement Program once a more accurate cost can be determined.

Respectfully Submitted


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Concurrence:



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