

Agenda Report

November 4, 2013

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Department of Public Works

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION TO ENTER INTO AGREEMENT WITH CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR MAINTENANCE OF LANDSCAPE AREA WITHIN STATE HIGHWAY RIGHT-OF-WAY, FOR PROPOSED SOUNDWALL ALONG PASADENA AVENUE ADJACENT TO INTERSTATE 210

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council authorize the City Manager to execute an agreement for Maintenance of Landscape Area within State Highway Right-of-Way with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for the proposed soundwall along Pasadena Avenue adjacent to Interstate 210 in perpetuity.

BACKGROUND:

State law requires Caltrans to construct soundwalls along freeways but in many cases, these walls were not built and the backlog will take decades to clear. Caltrans allows cities to advance soundwall projects if funding is procured and cities provide design and construction services after applying for a Caltrans permit. Any additional landscaping, irrigation or other improvements require a maintenance agreement between cities and Caltrans. Following construction, the wall becomes Caltrans property for future maintenance. As part of the FY 2009-2014 Capital Improvement Program, the City Council approved the Route 210 Freeway Soundwall project. The project is planned to be completed in two phases and the total cost was estimated to be approximately \$40,000,000; however, recent construction estimates are \$20,000,000 for Phase I and \$10,000,000 for Phase II. The CIP will be amended during the FY 2015 budget process to reflect this updated total estimated cost of \$30,000,000.

Phase I of the project includes the east portion of the 210 Freeway between Fair Oaks Avenue and Wilson Avenue. This phase is being administered by Caltrans/Metro and the environmental documentation of the Phase I soundwalls was completed in FY 2007. Detailed design and construction will be completed by Caltrans/Metro when State funding becomes available.

Phase II of this project provides for the construction of soundwalls along the northern section of the Route 210 Freeway from Orange Grove Boulevard/SR-134 to Arroyo Boulevard/Windsor Avenue.

Between 2005 and 2009, the Federal Highway Administration incrementally awarded the City of Pasadena a \$1,255,856 Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU) grant for the construction of a soundwall along the I-210 in Northwest Pasadena. A Request for Proposals (RFP) for this project was issued on June 4, 2008, for consulting services for Preliminary Engineering, Environmental Analysis, Design, and Right-of-Way Activities for the Installation of Soundwalls on I-210 Project. Based on their qualifications and successful interview, Parsons Engineering was ranked number one and selected for the project, and awarded a contract on January 12, 2009. Parsons collected noise measurements throughout the project area and drafted a Noise Study Report outlining potential locations that meet Caltrans feasibility criteria and the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (MTA) reasonableness criteria for soundwall construction, but only one soundwall option does not exceed the City's construction budget: an approximately 705-foot length of ten-foot high wall along the east side of Pasadena Avenue north of Orange Grove Boulevard (see Attachment A). A community meeting was conducted on November 18, 2010 to present the results of the study. In response to feedback received from participants at the community meeting, Parsons performed additional studies to determine if additional soundwalls could be constructed within the construction budget. Parsons investigated breaking the proposed systems of soundwalls into smaller pieces, but the wall segments would not meet Caltrans' or MTA's criteria for soundwall construction. In addition, there are no Caltrans-approved alternate materials that would reduce the budget, and the SAFETEA-LU funds cannot be used for any sound-proofing or acoustic treatments on individual homes.

Council consented Parsons to proceed to design with the selected wall on September 19, 2011. As part of the design process, Caltrans has agreed to provide a five-foot buffer between the wall and sidewalk to be landscaped with drought-tolerant plantings. Caltrans requires the City to execute the subject Agreement for Maintenance of Landscape Area with State Highway Right-of-Way for the portion of the project between the back of the existing sidewalk and the proposed wall. The agreement states that the City will submit plans and obtain necessary permits; provide and maintain water and irrigation systems including utility costs; keep the landscaped buffer free of litter and debris; maintain plantings; and keep the sidewalk clear and passable.

The soundwall plans are being reviewed by Caltrans' Permitting Department, and construction is scheduled to begin in spring 2014 and be completed by summer 2014.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

This project is consistent with the City Council's goal to support and promote the quality of life in the City. This project is also consistent with one of the objectives of the General Plan's Noise Element, which is to protect residential areas from freeway-generated noise by constructing sound-attenuating walls to serve as a noise barrier between the freeway and the residential areas abutting certain segments of the freeway. A finding of compliance with the General Plan was previously made and is shown on page 2.11 of the FY 2014-2018 Capital Improvement Program.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

On January 12, 2009, the City Council approved the underlying contract with Parsons Engineering and therein required that the appropriate environmental document be completed when enough information regarding the engineering, design and proposed locations of the walls was known to allow meaningful environmental review. An environmental review is being conducted by Caltrans, and a categorical exemption will be filed.

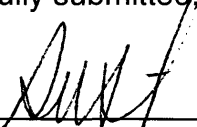
FISCAL IMPACT:

The total cost of the irrigation and maintenance being accepted by this action is less than \$500 a year, to be funded by the Department of Public Works Parks and Natural Resources Division. The execution of a maintenance agreement is required to complete the permitting process for the wall. Funding for the project will be addressed by the utilization of existing budgeted appropriations in the Route 210 Freeway Soundwalls (73705) CIP project when the project is ready to be awarded to the lowest responsive bidder.

The following table presents a summary of the sources of funds used for this project.

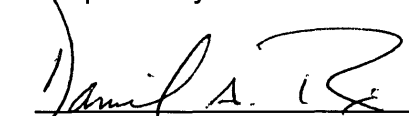
SAFETEA-LU Grant	\$1,255,856
Gas Tax	\$ 200,000
Commercial Development Fee	\$ 135,000
Total Sources	\$1,590,856

Respectfully submitted,



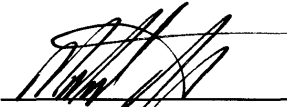
SIOBHAN FOSTER
Director of Public Works

Prepared by:



Cathy Chang
Principal Engineer

Approved by:



MICHAEL J. BECK
City Manager

Attachment A – Location Map of I-210 Soundwall