

# Agenda Report

May 8, 2023

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Department of Public Works

**SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION TO ENTER INTO TWO AGREEMENTS WITH CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PROPOSED SOUNDWALLS AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS ALONG INTERSTATE 210, BETWEEN FAIR OAKS AVENUE AND WILSON AVENUE**

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Acknowledge that the proposed project is determined by the California Department of Transportation to be categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and categorically excluded from the National Environmental Policy Act pursuant to a Categorical Exemption/Programmatic Categorical Exclusion Determination Form initially authorized in 2006, with multiple re-validations through 2020, and find the proposed agreements to be categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Class 1, Existing Facilities); and
2. Authorize the City Manager to execute two agreements with California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), for maintenance responsibilities within Caltrans' and City's rights-of-way respectively for proposed soundwalls at various locations along Interstate 210 (I-210) between Fair Oaks Avenue and Wilson Avenue.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (Metro) Countywide Retrofit Soundwall Program, Package 10 (Phase 1) project, includes construction of prioritized soundwalls within the city limits of Los Angeles, Arcadia and Pasadena. The soundwall segments in the City of Pasadena are located along the north and south side of the I-210 Freeway between Fair Oaks Avenue and Wilson Avenue. There are 11 segments of soundwalls at various locations along Maple Street and Corson Street, totaling approximately one mile. Locations of soundwall segments are mapped in Attachment A.

In accordance with Senate Bill 45, Metro is the agency responsible for the delivery of soundwall projects in Los Angeles County (programming of funding, design, and construction). The design plans and specifications of the project were prepared by Caltrans under Metro's leadership and have been reviewed by Pasadena's Public Works and Transportation departments. The project was initially designed by Caltrans in 2012, and further refined in 2018. A CEQA Programmatic Categorical Exemption Determination was filed in 2006 and re-validated five times between 2009 and 2020.

On June 22, 2021, Metro presented the project scope to City's Municipal Services Committee (MSC) and provided an overview of its Soundwall Implementation Policy and its countywide Soundwall Priority List. The soundwall segments included in this project are within Metro's higher priority Phase 1 list. Metro also promised to return to MSC upon construction contract award to outline the project's construction schedule and its community outreach and coordination efforts for the construction phase of the project.

The proposed scope of work includes the construction of up to 15-foot-high concrete masonry block walls within the I-210 right-of-way, along with restoration of impacted landscaping and irrigation, drainage facilities, utilities, pavement, signage, and striping. The soundwalls are located on Caltrans right-of-way, however, certain improvements including portions of soundwall spread footings encroach within the City's right-of-way along Maple Street and Corson Street. During the design of the project, up to 66 magnolia trees were identified to be removed for the construction of the soundwall footings, to be replaced by 100 California Coast Live Oaks. The project was presented to and acquired support from City's Urban Forestry Advisory Committee (UFAC) in 2010 with the following recommendations: increase size of replacement trees to 36-inch box; incorporate wells for vines along the sound wall; and provide dedicated irrigation for all new plants. Metro also provided informational project updates to UFAC in 2014 and more recently on July 14, 2021.

Under guidance from the City Attorney's Office, Public Works staff has worked with Caltrans to prepare agreements between the two agencies for division of maintenance responsibilities of project improvements within each agency's respective right-of-way. One of the agreements establishes City's responsibility for debris removal, cleaning, and painting of soundwalls to keep City's side of the wall free of debris, dirt, and graffiti. The City will also be responsible for maintenance of plantings on the City side of the fenced or walled area. The second agreement establishes Caltrans's responsibility to maintain, repair and/or replace all components of the project, including the soundwall footings encroaching within City's right-of-way. Caltrans shall obtain all necessary City permits for encroachment and work within City right-of-way; and shall restore all City improvements in kind and/or to its original condition after each maintenance activity.

Metro advertised the project for bids on June 6, 2022, and its Board awarded the construction contract to C.A. Rasmussen on March 13, 2023. Construction is anticipated to begin in June 2023 and will last approximately 2.5 years along various segments of the I-210 Freeway corridor. A project level traffic control plan has been developed and approved by the City's Public Works and Transportation departments for

the construction duration of the project. Lane closures along Corson Street and Maple Street will be limited to one-lane along the freeway-side of each roadway, and construction work hours will be limited in accordance with Pasadena's Municipal Code. Prior to mobilizing for construction, the contractor will also be required to acquire a Public Works permit and disseminate construction notices to all property owners and businesses within a 300-foot radius of the project as is customary.

On April 25, 2023, Metro is returning to MSC to provide a project update and elaborate on their community notification and outreach plan for the upcoming construction phase of the project. Metro's public outreach team has been meeting with City's Public Information Office (PIO) and Engineering staff to coordinate implementation efforts and ensure that the community and project-adjacent neighborhoods are made aware and kept apprised of the project activities. Metro's outreach plan will be implemented across various platforms, including briefings with City officials, neighborhood meetings, construction notice handouts to adjacent properties and coordination with City's PIO and Council District Liaisons for project update distributions to stakeholders. Throughout the duration of construction, project updates will be posted on Metro's social media sites and project-specific website at [www.metro.net](http://www.metro.net). Also, a dedicated project helpline (213-922-4008) and email address ([SoundwallProgram@metro.net](mailto:SoundwallProgram@metro.net)) are set up to handle inquiries from the public.

#### **COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:**

This action is consistent with the City Council's goal to support and promote the quality of life in the City. The project is also consistent with one of the objectives of the General Plan's Noise Element to protect residential areas from freeway-generated noise by constructing sound-attenuating walls to serve as barrier between the freeway and abutting residences.

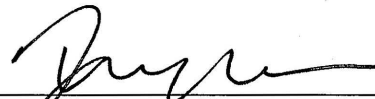
#### **ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

The subject of this agenda report is limited to maintenance agreements for graffiti, landscape, and subsurface footings within the City's right-of-way. Such maintenance activities are categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Class 1, Existing Facilities. This section exempts from CEQA, "the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use." The subject approval consists of maintenance activities with no expansion of use of the I-210 Freeway or any involved City right-of-way. There are no features that distinguish this project from others in the exempt class and, therefore, there are no unusual circumstances.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact as a result of this action, and it will not have any indirect or support cost requirements. The anticipated impact to other operational programs as a result of this action will be minimal: The total cost of any graffiti removal and landscape maintenance being accepted by this action is estimated to cost approximately \$18,000 per year beginning in FY 2026 and will be funded with appropriations in the operating budgets of the departments of Public Works and Parks, Recreation and Community Services.

Respectfully submitted,



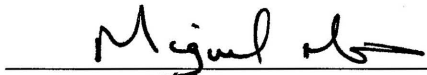
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MIGUEL MARQUEZ  
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Attachment A – Interstate 210 Soundwall Location Maps