



## CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

### PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** October 22, 2008

**TO:** Park and Recreation Commission

**FROM:** Parks Division, Parks and Recreation Department

**SUBJECT:** West Beach Pedestrian Improvement Project

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Commission:

- A. Review and approve the proposed Street Tree relocations; and,
- B. Provide recommendations to the Historic Landmarks Commission and City Council regarding the proposed West Beach Pedestrian Improvement Project .

#### **DISCUSSION:**

The Redevelopment Agency is proposing a range of improvements to the West Beach area designed to draw more Santa Barbara residents and visitors to the Waterfront Harbor area. The project includes the replacement of existing sidewalks, construction of pedestrian plazas and crosswalks, new irrigation and landscaping along Cabrillo Boulevard and within the pedestrian refuge islands, renovated landscaping at Sea Landing and Los Baños, new lighting, and other amenities. The project is further described in the attached staff report from the Redevelopment Agency. Specific to Parks and Recreation, the project includes a number of improvements that will enhance the area around the wading pool and Los Baños. These include:

- Removal of the concrete under the ficus trees and installation of decomposed granite.
- Relocation of the five picnic tables that are currently underneath the ficus trees. Two tables would be relocated to the south side of the playground area, one picnic table would be realigned out of the tree drip line, and two would be placed at the southwest corner of the wading pool area.
- Installation of a new sidewalk leading to the playground to maintain handicap accessibility.
- Renovation of the landscape between the wading pool and Los Baños.
- Installation of lighting along the sidewalk between the wading pool and Los Baños.

### Landscaping

As mentioned above, new landscaping is proposed for the pedestrian plazas, crossings and pedestrian refuge islands at Chapala, Bath, and Castillo Streets, and the proposed crossing at Ambassador Park. The proposed project also includes new landscaping underneath 58 existing palm trees on the ocean-side of Cabrillo Boulevard. New landscaped areas total 3,908 square feet. The plant pallet from the East Beach sidewalk improvement project is proposed. The attached plans provide additional information about the proposed landscape.

While it has not yet been determined which department will be responsible for maintenance and how the maintenance will be funded, if maintenance falls to Parks and Recreation, staff is very concerned about the cost and impact to existing park operations. The West Beach area receives fairly high foot traffic which could make maintenance more challenging. Maintenance of landscaping located within medians and refuge islands also presents safety issues.

### Trees

The proposed tree relocations are also discussed under the Street Tree Advisory Committee recommendation. Four *Washingtonia robusta* are proposed for removal and relocation to Sea Landing. Two *Phoenix canariensis* are proposed for planting on Cabrillo Boulevard as part of the plaza/landscape at the Ambassador Park pedestrian crosswalk.

Although the Street Tree Advisory Committee recommends that the Commission approve the relocation, staff recommends that instead of planting two new *Phoenix canariensis*, two of the existing *Washingtonia robusta* be relocated within the new landscaping and two be relocated to Sea Landing. The basis for this recommendation includes:

- The designated species for Cabrillo Boulevard is *Washingtonia robusta*.
- The fronds of the *Phoenix canariensis* have sharp spines that would present a danger to pedestrians
- The trunks of the *Phoenix canariensis* are much thicker than the *Washingtonia* and would present a larger visual barrier to pedestrians trying to cross the street
- The fronds and fruit of *Phoenix canariensis* drop more readily than *Washingtonia* requiring a higher level of service to keep the area safe.

### **BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:**

Although the responsibility for the additional maintenance has not yet been determined, the estimated impact to maintain the new landscape is 607 hours per year. The cost associated with this maintenance is estimated to be \$14,290 per year. Annual landscape materials and supplies are estimated at \$5,850. The estimated total cost for maintenance

is \$20,140 per year. This does not include the cost for water meter service. No additional funds have been allocated to this project for maintenance and supplies.

**ATTACHMENTS:** 1. Redevelopment Agency Staff Report  
2. West Beach Pedestrian Improvement Project Plans

**PREPARED BY:** Santos M. Escobar, Parks Manager

**SUBMITTED BY:** Jill E. Zachary, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director

**APPROVED BY:** Nancy L. Rapp, Parks and Recreation Director