

REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

DATE: OCTOBER 26, 2005

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: GREG RAMIREZ, CITY MANAGER

BY: MICHAEL KAMINO, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION REGARDING LANDSCAPED PARKWAYS AND MEANDERING SIDEWALKS

The purpose of this item is to receive direction from the City Council about the City's policy regarding the future provision of landscaped parkways and meandering sidewalks. This is before the City Council as a discussion item at the request of Councilmember Reinhardt.

In various parts of the City there are landscaped parkways that are located between the curb and sidewalk within the City right-of-way. They are typically installed at time of project development, particularly as part of large planned projects and subdivisions. Examples include the Piedmont Development (the area on both sides of Agoura Road, east of Reyes Adobe Road), the Katell Development (the area on the north side of Agoura Road, west of Reyes Adobe Road), and the Lake Lindero community. Landscaped parkways can either be of a conventional linear design or can be curvilinear in design done in conjunction with a meandering sidewalk. They serve as aesthetic enhancements along a traffic corridor and help soften the appearance of the built environment from the street. Landscaped parkways also enhance the walking experience and serve as a physical buffer between pedestrians and the roadway and provide a sense of defensible space for pedestrians from vehicular traffic. They also have the added environmental benefit of helping to reduce direct runoff onto the street and gutter.

All landscaping in parkways are in the City right-of-way, but are privately maintained. Sidewalks, however, are maintained by the City. Issues have arisen in the past regarding maintenance of landscaping in parkways and enforcement efforts must be applied when maintenance becomes a problem. The City has varying right-of-way dimensions on properties. There may not be sufficient right-of-way in front of certain properties for a parkway without requiring additional right-of-way dedication. Property owners would be responsible for bearing the cost of additional landscape installation and maintenance and would likely object to giving up additional right-of-way if it results in reduction in developable area. Also, on certain properties, a requirement to install additional parkways or meandering sidewalks could result in increased slope or retaining wall height given topographic conditions. Alternatives would be to require an easement or reducing or eliminating existing right-of-way improvements such as medians, bike lanes, sidewalks, and pavement in order to provide the landscaped parkway. Also, new meandering sidewalks installed at in-fill sites where there are no adjacent meandering sidewalks could result in

an inconsistent streetscape appearance. If retrofitting is required to install landscaped parkways there will be issues of relocating existing improvements, utilities, and landscaping.

Currently the City does not have an official policy or regulation regarding landscaped parkways. However, while done in a piecemeal fashion, City staff has worked with individual developers in incorporating parkways with meandering sidewalks and landscaping when possible where there is sufficient right-of-way. An option would be for Council to provide direction to staff through a minute motion to continue with this policy. Another option would be to give direction to staff to place this matter as a City Council priority and for staff to commence further research and formulate recommendation for Council consideration. However, this is currently not part of staff's work program and would need to displace other work projects if Council so chose to proceed.

RECOMMENDATION

This report is intended to provide basic information regarding landscaped parkways. Staff respectfully requests direction from the City Council regarding the provision of landscaped parkways.

Attachments: Photos of Landscaped Parkways