



CITY OF

NEWPORT BEACH

City Council Staff Report

February 14, 2017
Agenda Item No. 22

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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TITLE: 15th Street Sidewalk Conceptual Approval-Newport Heights

ABSTRACT:

Parents, students and others in the Newport Heights area have asked for ways to improve pedestrian and bike access to Newport Heights Elementary School. One request was for a full sidewalk on the south side of 15th Street, between Irvine Avenue and Santa Ana Avenue. 15th Street is currently designated as a "Significant Link" street requiring property owners to install the sidewalk as redevelopment occurs. Portions of this sidewalk have been installed over the years by developments. Staff is asking City Council to consider accelerating the in-fill installation of this sidewalk by approving the concept and incorporating it into the upcoming Newport Heights Concrete Alley Capital Improvement Project.

RECOMMENDATION:

- a) Determine that the action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15301 (Existing Facilities) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has no potential to have a significant effect on the environment based on the sidewalk being constructed within the improved right of way; and
- b) Review the conceptual sidewalk layout and provide guidance on the concept; approve the concept; waive City Council Policy G-1 and approve the removal of public trees to accommodate the sidewalk, and direct staff to work with the Parks, Beaches, and Recreation Commission on the selection of replacement trees; direct staff to bring back a budget amendment for the project; and incorporate the sidewalk work into the upcoming Newport Heights Concrete Alley Project.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS:

The proposed project is not currently listed in the FY 16/17 Capital Improvement Program Budget. A budget amendment will be required and would be brought forward for future consideration. The project is currently estimated to cost \$500,000.00.

DISCUSSION:

During Fall 2016, the Public Works Department reached out to the Newport Heights community regarding a planned on-street bicycle lane striping improvement on 15th Street. At that time, the City mailed approximately 240 letters to the surrounding community explaining the proposed bicycle lane project and in turn received a variety of feedback in support and opposition of the project.

Those who opposed it were most concerned about the loss of on-street parking in both Newport Beach and Costa Mesa. From that outreach, many requests were made to complete the sidewalk along the south side of 15th Street between Irvine Avenue and Santa Ana Avenue rather than the on-street bicycle lane. Representatives from Newport Heights Elementary School also requested that the City complete the missing sidewalk segments. Representatives from Ensign Intermediate School have also requested that the City install a missing sidewalk segment at the corner of Irvine Avenue and Cliff Drive in front of Ensign.

Public Works is currently preparing to advertise Newport Heights Alley Project for construction. Originally the project was broken up into two phases. After the December 13, 2016 rejection of the bids, staff is proceeding to combine all of the alley work into one large project with bidding to occur shortly. Taking this recent feedback for sidewalks into consideration, staff is asking for City Council permission to incorporate these sidewalk in-fill requests into the adjacent alley concrete pavement replacement project.

Attachment A outlines the approximate location of the proposed sidewalk. Although design details have not been prepared at this preliminary point, the concept is a 6 to 7-foot-wide sidewalk to be constructed against the existing curb within the 10'-12' public parkway along the south side of 15th Street. Preliminary surveys indicate that the in-fill sidewalk is needed along 10 properties and modifications may be needed to the existing six properties which already have sidewalks. The sidewalk in front of Ensign Intermediate School, as shown on the attachment, would also close the gap for the missing sidewalk segments at the corner of Irvine Avenue and Cliff Drive.

Also, with in-fill sidewalks, come the consideration for existing trees. Along this stretch of 15th Street, approximately 35 trees of varying type and age will require removal within the City right-of-way; 16 of these trees are designated as "special trees" under Council Policy G-1. It is never easy to remove mature trees, as area residents can develop great fondness for them, but the sidewalk cannot be completed without removing those that would block the path of the sidewalk.

If Council agrees, staff believes that the City Council should review and approve the removal of these trees to install the sidewalk. Typically, the Parks, Beaches, and Recreation Commission (PB&R) would review the trees and make a recommendation as an interim step. Respectfully, given that the sidewalk cannot be completed without removing the trees, staff believes that it is appropriate to move this decision directly to the City Council.

PB&R also has a role, though, in the reforestation of this area once the sidewalks are complete. Staff suggests asking PB&R to work with property owners, our tree service, and the Municipal Operations Department staff to select replacement trees at locations where they can be placed behind the new sidewalk.

The public right-of-way behind the curb face is between 9 and 12 feet. Although this area between the curb, in front of private properties is public, several private properties have installed private improvements such as walkways, landscaping, fences, etc. As part of this project's concept approval, Public Works staff would work with and coordinate with the adjacent properties to integrate their frontage landscaping and new street trees into the sidewalk design.

Staff requests that City Council review the new sidewalk concept and provide guidance on the proposed project. If acceptable, provide approval of the sidewalk project concept, approve the removal of any affected public trees to accommodate the sidewalk and direct staff to work with the Parks, Beaches, and Recreation Commission on the selection of replacement trees.

Staff would plan to accelerate the necessary design work by using the existing design consultant for the Alley Project and incorporating it in the upcoming Newport Heights Concrete Alley Project. A budget amendment from the undesignated General Fund for the project will be included with the award of the Alley Project. Construction of the alley and sidewalk project should begin in late spring and continue through the summer.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

Staff recommends the City Council find this project exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has no potential to have a significant effect on the environment based on the sidewalk being constructed within the improved right of way.

NOTICING:

The agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the City Council considers the item).

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Conceptual Sidewalk Layout Plan
Attachment B – City Council Policy G-1