



Agenda Item

City Council

Item #: 7.2.

10/13/2021

File #: 21-0549

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

THRU: Bonnie Hagan, Acting City Manager

FROM: Susan Galvan, Interim Community Development Director

1. SUBJECT

Orange Plaza Paseo long-term plan and streetscape program.

2. SUMMARY

The City created the Orange Plaza Paseo in July 2020 in response to COVID-19 restrictions placed on dining and retail businesses. While many of the COVID-19 related restrictions have been removed in California, including limits on indoor dining and shopping, certain pandemic conditions still exist. As such, the City Council approved continuation of the Paseo on a temporary basis until the end of 2021. In addition, the City Council provided direction to staff to move forward with a study of a paseo in the form of an annual seasonal closure of North and South Glassell Street, including engaging a streetscape designer and preparing an environmental analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). In light of the goals of the paseo program to support a vibrant downtown experience within the historic environment, staff also considered a "parklet" option, which expands outdoor dining and retail in on-street parking spaces while maintaining vehicular traffic on Glassell Street.

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Option 1 - Annual Seasonal Paseo

1. Approve agreement with The Arroyo Group in the amount of \$68,120 for preparation of the Orange Plaza Paseo Streetscape Design Study; and authorize the City Manager and City Clerk to execute on behalf of the City; and
2. Approve agreement with Dudek in the amount of \$146,886 for environmental services for the Orange Plaza Paseo; and authorize the City Manager and City Clerk to execute on behalf of the City; and
3. Authorize the transfer of \$215,006 from expenditure account 952.9810.56020.20247, City Trf: NW & SW Merged 2003 Taxable Bonds - SAORA Capital Projects, to expenditure account number 952.9810.51670.20492, City Trf: NW & SW Merged 2003 Taxable Bonds - Orange Plaza Paseo.

Option 2 -Design of "Parklets"

1. Approve agreement with The Arroyo Group in the amount not-to-exceed \$68,120 for preparation of the Orange Plaza Paseo Streetscape Design Study; and authorize the City

Manager and City Clerk to execute on behalf of the City; and

2. Authorize the transfer of \$68,120 from expenditure account 952.9810.56020.20247, City Trf: NW & SW Merged 2003 Taxable Bonds - SAORA Capital Projects, to expenditure account number 952.9810.51670.20492, City Trf: NW & SW Merged 2003 Taxable Bonds - Orange Plaza Paseo.

4. FISCAL IMPACT

The total expenditure for the Option 1 is \$215,006 and will be funded in Orange Plaza Paseo (20492) through City Trf: NW & SW Merged 2003 Taxable Bonds (952).

The total expenditure for the Option 2 is not-to-exceed \$68,120 and will be funded in Orange Plaza Paseo (20492) through City Trf: NW & SW Merged 2003 Taxable Bonds (952).

5. STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Goal 3. Enhance and promote quality of life in the community.

- a. Refurbish, maintain, develop and/or expand public use places and spaces.

Goal 5. Recognize, promote, and preserve Orange's rich heritage.

- b. Expand and strengthen processes and practices related to protection of cultural resources.

6. DISCUSSION AND BACKGROUND

Introduction

As part of the City's efforts to support the Old Towne business community during the pandemic, in July 2020, the 100 blocks of North and South Glassell Street were closed off to vehicular traffic to offset indoor restrictions imposed by the State of California and Orange County Health Department. While many of the COVID-19 related restrictions have been removed in California, including limits on in-door dining and shopping, certain pandemic conditions still exist. In addition, since its inception, the Orange Plaza Paseo (Paseo) has become a popular destination with locals and visitors and there has been much support from both businesses and the public to continue the Paseo in some fashion. As such, at the August 10, 2021 City Council meeting, the City Council provided staff direction to initiate the process to perform an environmental review and provide design guidelines for a seasonal Paseo. While the initial implementation of the Paseo did not require a CEQA analysis due to the pandemic and the State's subsequent Emergency Order, staff determined that a seasonal Paseo will require an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND). Furthermore, the City Council directed staff to keep Glassell Street closed and re-open the Paseo on a temporary basis after the Orange International Street Fair, through December 31, 2021 while the studies are conducted which were anticipated to be completed in early 2022.

Temporary Paseo

Permits for the temporary paseo were accepted starting on August 13, 2021. Staff has received 18 permit applications as of October 6, 2021. Approximately 10 more are expected within the next few weeks due to the upcoming holiday season. Of the applications received, staff is working with each merchant to ensure compliance of ADA, insurance, and Fire Code requirements. In addition, because the Paseo returned on a temporary basis, staff is being sensitive to any additional costs incurred by the merchants to meet the furniture palette standards. In some cases, staff is being

flexible on the color and material of the furniture while still maintaining the intent of the standards. All merchants have been notified of the pending studies and have been advised that the current furniture may not meet future standards should the City Council approve a seasonal Paseo in the future.

Annual Seasonal Paseo

Streetscape Design

The streetscape design for an annual seasonal paseo is a specialized scope of work, requiring extensive experience in designing for public spaces within a historic environment. Based on the project scope and the Council's direction on project timing, staff reached out to The Arroyo Group to provide a proposal for the annual seasonal paseo. The Arroyo Group worked successfully with staff on the Santa Fe Depot Specific Plan and has demonstrated experience in historic districts, including Old Towne. The Arroyo Group's scope of work includes development of conceptual design plans for a historically appropriate streetscape program. Because the project expanded to include solutions for businesses on Chapman Avenue to operate in parking spaces during the seasonal paseo, the cost estimate from the consultant increased. The agreement for the streetscape design is \$68,120.

CEQA

With Council direction, staff solicited proposals from qualified environmental consulting firms to complete the necessary California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document for the annual seasonal paseo. The scope of work is anticipated to be an Initial Study-Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS-MND) with an emphasis on technical studies in the areas of aesthetics, cultural resources, air quality, noise, and traffic. The preferred consultant demonstrated a strong understanding of the project scope, necessary areas of study, and the project environment. The cost estimate for the environmental document is \$146,886. The timeline to complete the study is 34 weeks.

Details of the permit program, design standards, and implementation would return to the Council for approval in mid to late summer 2022.

Alternative to Annual Seasonal Paseo

With the lengthy lead-time to complete, evaluate, and potentially develop an implementation plan for mitigation measures of the CEQA study, an alternative to the annual seasonal paseo would be to permit the installation of "parklets" utilizing the on-street parking spaces on Chapman Avenue and Glassell Street. Parklets are public seating platforms that convert curbside parking spaces into outdoor spaces for either dining or other commercial use. With this option, the streets would remain open to vehicular traffic, but Plaza merchants would gain additional usable outdoor spaces beyond the existing sidewalks. Implementation of a parklet program on its own would not require CEQA review. Additionally, parklets do not impact vehicle circulation, could be implemented without closing Glassell Street, and would not require modifications to the Master Plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH) through OCTA.

A flexible but consistent parklet design standard would be implemented to fit within the parking spaces in front of individual businesses at their request. The design standard would be drafted to be consistent with historic preservation standards as well as providing for needed safety and accessibility requirements. The streetscape design consultant's scope of work would be transitioned to create this type of design should the City Council direct staff to pursue the parklet option. Should the City Council want to pursue this option, the current permit program would need to be modified to

accommodate the change in scope. Staff recommends that permits be issued for a minimum term of three years to support the investment from businesses in the construction of a parklet.

The details of a parklet permit program and parklet design standards would return to the Council for approval in early 2022.

7. ATTACHMENTS

- Proposals For Annual Seasonal Paseo
- Parklet Examples