

CITY OF SUNNYVALE

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

February 1, 2013

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

THROUGH: Grace Leung, Director of Finance 

FROM: Drew Corbett, Assistant Director of Finance 

SUBJECT: Budget Issues Submissions

Enclosed in this section of your Council Packet are the two budget issues that have been submitted for consideration at today's Budget Issues Workshop. One of these budget issues were submitted for inclusion into the original Council packet for the January 8th public hearing. One additional budget issue was developed after the public hearing. This final budget issue, Assumption of Landscape Median Responsibility on Central Expressway, has been included in the back of the Budget Issues tab of your updated Council binder.

BUDGET ISSUE SUMMARY FORM

Budget Issue Title: Assumption of Landscape Median Responsibility on Central Expressway

Lead Department: Public Works

General Plan Chapter: Community Character - Design

1. What are the key elements of the issue? What precipitated it?

A resident recently commented on the contrast between landscape maintenance efforts along Central Expressway in Mountain View versus Sunnyvale and asked if maintenance standards could be increased in Sunnyvale.

Central Expressway is part of the county-wide expressway system and is owned and operated by the County of Santa Clara. In Sunnyvale, it spans approximately 3.5 miles between Middlefield Road in Mountain View and Oakmead Parkway near Santa Clara. Maintenance responsibility for the Expressway, including landscaping, resides with the Santa Clara County Department of Roads and Airports. In Mountain View, the City has chosen to augment landscaping and landscape maintenance at its own expense.

In reviewing landscape features along the Expressway, the area west of Mary Avenue has fully planted medians and is similar to the landscape treatments found in Mountain View. The area east of Mary Avenue has more limited planting, particularly in medians. The issue in this area goes beyond landscape maintenance practices to include the lack of landscaping.

2. How does this relate to the General Plan or existing City Policy?

Policy CC-2.1. Maintain and provide attractive landscaping in the public right-of-way to identify the different types of roadways and districts, make motorists more comfortable and improve the enjoyment of residential neighborhoods.

3. Is the budget issue a: PROJECT X OPERATING X

Improving landscaping along Central Expressway would require both a capital project to provide landscaping in areas that currently contain little landscaping (e.g. medians east of Mary Avenue), and ongoing maintenance including watering, weed control, trimming, and litter removal.

4. **If the issue is operating, specify the change in service objective(s) that would result (from what, to what). If the issue is a project, write N/A.**
Landscape maintenance is currently provided for by Santa Clara County. This would be considered a new service rather than a change to existing service objectives.

5. **Origin of issue:** Council X Councilmember: Whittum
Board and Commission _____ **Board/Commission:** _____
Staff _____ **Department** _____

6. **Projected cost (list rough annual cost of budget item):**

Initial Project Expenditure	\$500,000 to \$750,000
Annual Operating Costs	\$100,000 to \$200,000
Annual Revenue	\$0

7. **Recommended funding source:**

New revenue source _____
Service level reduction X
Other _____

Please describe recommended funding source:

No funds are currently allocated to maintain landscaping along the roadways owned and maintained by the County. The Central Expressway median islands alone comprise about 13 acres of land in Sunnyvale. Improving and maintaining this area would be a significant new service. The medians of City streets are currently maintained by the Department of Public Works Parks Division. Taking on this new responsibility would reduce the level of effort currently used to maintain parks, open space and medians. Additional costs for watering would also diminish resources available for landscape maintenance throughout Sunnyvale.

8. Staff evaluation and recommendation of proposed budget issue:

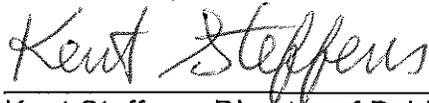
Evaluation: Maintaining the landscaping on Central Expressway would be a new service without a corresponding funding source to pay for it. Both initial landscape improvements and ongoing maintenance costs would have to come from the City's General Fund. Unless a new funding source was identified, this new service, which is currently the responsibility of another government agency, would come at the expense of existing City services. If additional General Fund revenues were available, restoring service levels from programs that were reduced in recent years during difficult budget times would be considered a higher priority. One example would be fully funding the sidewalk replacement program. Another could be re-establishing the red curb painting program. These would both be considered a higher priority than providing a new landscape maintenance service.

Refer budget issue for consideration in Recommended Budget _____

Defer budget issue to future fiscal year _____

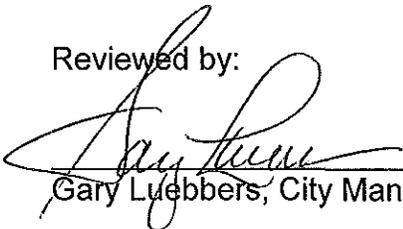
Drop budget issue X

Reviewed by:



Kent Steffens, Director of Public Works

Reviewed by:



Gary Luebbers, City Manager