



# AGENDA REPORT

SAN CLEMENTE CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
Meeting Date: September 3, 2019

Agenda Item 9B

**Approvals:**

City Manager [Signature]

Dept. Head [Signature]

Attorney \_\_\_\_\_

Finance [Signature]

**Department:** Public Works  
**Prepared By:** Tom Bonigut, Public Works Director/City Engineer

**Subject:** **APPROVE THE LANDSCAPING CONCEPTUAL DESIGN FOR THE CAMINO DE LOS MARES REHABILITATION PROJECT No. 19318.**

**Fiscal Impact:** None at this time.

**Summary:** Staff recommends that the City Council approve the landscaping conceptual design for the Camino De Los Mares medians as further discussed below.

**Background:** The approved Capital Improvement Program includes a project to rehabilitate Camino De Los Mares from Interstate 5 east to Avenida Vaquero. Project design is underway, and the project will include reconstructing failed pavement sections, grinding off the existing asphalt cap and installing a new asphalt cap over the entire six-lane roadway, replacing almost all concrete median curbs, installing new striping and pavement legends, repairing concrete sidewalk and "outside" curb & gutter sections as needed, and adding new or upgrading existing curb ramps as appropriate. This work is budgeted at \$2.5 million, which will be funded from the increased State Gas Tax which was approved in 2017. Based on citizen input, the City Council also approved an additional \$280,000 (50% General Fund; 50% water conservation funds) to rehabilitate the median landscaping. In general, the City Council directed to retain the existing mature palm trees in the median, but replace all other low-lying landscaping with a drought-tolerant plant palette similar to that used in other recent City projects such as the North El Camino Real Bicycle/Pedestrian Path and Camino Del Rio Roundabouts projects. This project will also rehabilitate several medians in the City portion of Camino De Estrella west of Interstate 5 with the design concept discussed below, except for the existing mature pine trees which will remain.

**Discussion:** Currently, 60 percent level design plans have been completed and are being reviewed by various City departments and utility companies. Before proceeding to final design, staff seeks concurrence from the City Council that the current median landscaping conceptual design is consistent with the City Council's expectations and prior direction for the project. The following bullet points highlight key facets of the proposed median landscaping improvements, and several photos and visual simulations are attached to help depict the proposed median improvements.

*Irrigation System*

- Retain existing controllers.
- Replace pipes as needed.
- Install drip systems and/or rotary heads.

### *Hardscape*

- Remove most existing red stamped concrete from medians (see Photo 1 in Attachment 1).
- Install decorative paver border along medians and in narrow median areas, similar to those in the Talega area, except with paver type and color pattern similar to existing City standard for decorative paver sidewalks (see Photos 2 through 4 in Attachment 1).
- Remove two existing cobble stone raised planter boxes in the Camino De Estrella median (see Photos 5 and 6 in Attachment 1).
- Install meandering decorative cobble/stone (see Photo 7 in Attachment 1).

### *Landscape*

- Install decorative mulch/bark in between plantings (see Photo 7 in Attachment 1).
- Retain existing mature palms in Camino De Los Mares medians and existing mature pines trees in Camino De Estrella medians (see Photos 8 and 9 in Attachment 1).
- Remove all existing low lying landscaping and replace with drought tolerant plant palette. Where significant gaps exist in the Camino De Los Mares medians, install new palm trees. See Attachment 2 for sample plan view and plant palette, and see Attachment 3 for corresponding visual simulation.
- New palm trees, and any future replacements of existing palms, should be changed from the existing Canary Island Date Palm (*Phoenix canariensis*) to a Date Palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*) for better resistance to disease. Photo 10 in Attachment 1 depicts existing Date Palms in the nearby Ocean View Plaza shopping center parking lot which have a similar appearance to the Canary Island Date Palms.
- Existing parkway trees along Camino De Los Mares and existing parkway palms along Camino De Estrella will be retained. Any existing metal tree well grates along Camino De Los Mares will be removed, the planter boxes slightly enlarged, and filled with compacted decomposed granite to better prevent trip hazards.

It is important to note that the proposed landscape concept is not consistent with the City's Master Landscape Plan for Scenic Corridors (adopted in 1989 and revised in 1992). While that plan is technically still in effect, the City Council has approved alternate landscaping designs and treatments for improvement projects that have been implemented since then (e.g. North El Camino Real bicycle/pedestrian path, Camino Del Rio roundabouts, Avenida Pico/Interstate 5 interchange reconstruction, Marblehead Coastal development for West Avenida Vista Hermosa and Avenida Pico). The portion of this Master Plan that addresses Camino De Estrella and this section of Camino De Los Mares is provided in Attachment 4 for reference. Generally, the proposed landscaping approach above would entirely replace the existing Master Plan plant palette, except for the Fern Pine parkway trees on Camino De Los Mares. If the proposed landscape concept described above is consistent with the City Council's prior direction, then staff recommends approval of this updated landscape

design concept, with a specific notation to acknowledge the deviation from the 1992 Master Landscape Plan for Scenic Corridors.

As noted above, the current approved budget for this comprehensive rehabilitation project is \$2.78 million. As the design is finalized staff will prepare a construction cost estimate to compare against the approved budget prior to starting the public bidding process. Before bidding staff will update the City Council on the estimated project cost, as well as the proposed construction sequencing which might involve some nighttime work to help minimize disruption in this heavily used corridor. The project is tentatively planned for construction in Spring 2020.

**Recommended**

**Action:** STAFF RECOMMENDS THAT the City Council approve the landscaping conceptual design described and depicted in this report for the Camino De Los Mares medians (as part of the Camino De Los Mares Rehabilitation Project No. 19318), and acknowledge and approve this deviation from the 1992 Master Landscape Plan for Scenic Corridors.

**Attachments:**

1. Photos
2. Sample plan view plant palette
3. Plant palette visual simulation
4. Excerpt from 1992 Master Landscape Plan for Scenic Corridors

**Notification:** None.

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**Photo 1. Existing red stamped concrete to be removed, and low concrete curb to be replaced with new full height concrete curb.**



**Photo 2. Example of decorative paver median border on Avenida Vista Hermosa.**



**Photo 3. Example of existing City standard decorative paver in crosswalk on West Avenida Vista Hermosa.**



**Photo 4. Proposed decorative paver for Los Mares medians: Orco Block Antique Cobble paving stone, Montecito color, 6" x 8", running bond pattern as shown.**



**Photo 5. Existing cobble planter box to be removed (on Camino De Estrella west of Mira Costa).  
Red stamped concrete and grey concrete median border to be removed.**



**Photo 6. Existing cobble planter box to be removed (on Camino De Estrella east of Vista Del Mar).  
Red stamped concrete and grey concrete median border to be removed.**



Photo 7. Example of meandering cobble stone and decorative mulch (at Camino Del Rio and Camino De Los Mares roundabout).



Photo 8. Existing Canary Island Date Palm (*Phoenix canariensis*) on Camino De Los Mares.



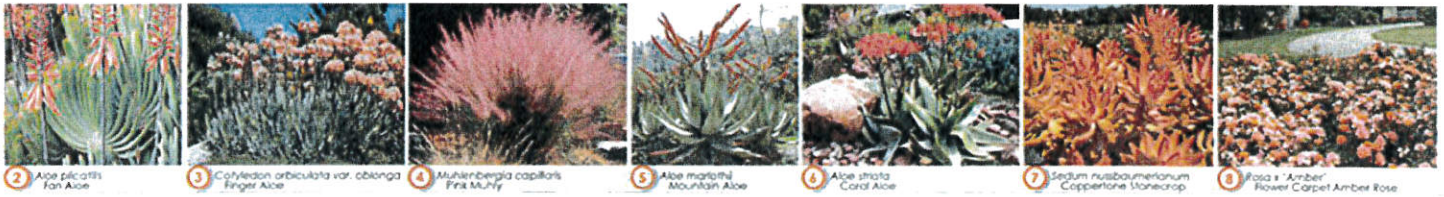
Photo 9. Existing mature Aleppo pine trees in Camino De Estrella median.



Photo 10. Example of Date Palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*) in Ralph's Shopping Center on Camino De Los Mares.



CAMINO DE LOS MARES & CAMINO DE ESTRELLA  
Landscape Concept Example Plan View



**PLANTING, GROUNDCOVER & EXISTING LEGEND:**

- 1** Pavers in median noses and 12" maintenance safety strip
- 9** Existing palms to protect (pines not shown in this median)
- 18** Existing hardscape around utilities reduced when feasible



CAMINO DE LOS MARES & CAMINO DE ESTRELLA  
Landscape Concept Visual Simulation



BEFORE (Existing View)



AFTER (Simulated New Landscaping)

**Camino de Estrella  
Camino de los Mares  
-- "The Gateway Corridor"  
Minor Recreation Corridor**

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**Corridor Character**

Camino de Estrella/Camino de los Mares is a minor urban corridor that provides access to residential development within Forster Ranch and linkage to the Pacific Ocean coastal areas west of Interstate 5. Camino de Estrella is the first east-west corridor at the City's northern limits. This corridor as it becomes Camino de los Mares continues in a north/south direction. Eventually, as Camino de los Mares enters the "Recreation Corridor" or Inland Segment, it again follows an east/west course inland.

The visual experience is primarily urban in character with views and vistas of the ocean particularly within the Interstate 5 Interchange area. Distant views of ridgelines and other natural features occur at various locations along this route. Neighborhood commercial, retail and professional offices occur along portions of this urban corridor, with an eventual transition occurring which includes residential development and manufactured slopes at the corridor edge.

**Existing Conditions**

East of Interstate 5, along Camino de Estrella southern edge, a semi-formal street-tree program occurs which include arrangements of mature Phoenix canariensis (Canary Island Date Palms). The existing median is devoid of any planting. A portion of the median (approximately down the center) is the responsibility of Dana Point and falls outside City jurisdiction.<sup>1</sup>

West of Interstate 5, Camino de los Mares landscape improvements contain a formalized planting of *Podocarpus gracilor* (Fern pine). This consistent treatment creates a distinguishable and identifiable character along the City's northern edge. The soft billowy form and texture complements the plantings in the median and provides a strong street tree effect. Street trees are placed within ornate iron tree grates to add a more enriched and urban "finish" to this important link to inland locations.

Medians contain a strong vertical accent planting of Phoenix canariensis (Canary Island Date Palms) creating a "grove effect." The repeated patterns—such as the intricate trunks, the large graceful fronds, and the colorful hanging fruit (droops)—act to provide a definite

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<sup>1</sup>All efforts should be made to coordinate comprehensive plans between the City of San Clemente and adjoining jurisdictions.

landmark planting. Colorful flowering *Nerium oleander* and *Rhapiholepis indica* (India Hawthorne) provide a vegetative relief at vehicular eye level and act to unify groundplane. In addition, dark-green Junipers provide a continuous groundcover to contrast both textures of enriched paving and palm tree trunks at base level.

Enriched paving material is a stamped concrete (12" square pattern) in a terra cotta color. Strategically placed paving adds to the urban setting and acts to provide similar architectural elements reflective of Spanish-themed villages throughout San Clemente.

### **Special Opportunities**

The landscape treatment employed east of Interstate 5 shall be continued along Camino de Estrella as a means of unifying this "Gateway Corridor." *Podocarpus gracilor* (Fern Pine) shall be incorporated where possible, space permitting, and should be encouraged outside City boundaries along the northern edge of Camino de Estrella.

In order to preserve views and vistas toward the ocean, further planting of monumental trees (*Phoenix canariensis* – Canary Island Date Palm) shall be discouraged within the median area. Open-character trees and/or low-growing palms which reflect Spanish Mediterranean themes shall be utilized.

Neighborhood-entry statements will occur at minor intersections along the corridor. Refer to the design and policies regarding primary and secondary City entries and key intersections to avoid potential conflict between major City elements and minor neighborhood statements.

### **Design Goals**

- Reflect a transition between the limits of urban development and recreational open space.
- Employ plant materials in this urban situation that offer a transition between urban and rural conditions.
- The streetscape design will provide visual continuity for the corridor.
- Preserve views from proposed residential developments and for motorists traveling along the corridor.
- Use streetscape to minimize impact of manufactured slopes.

### **Theme**

Camino de Estrella/Camino de los Mares are referred to as "The Gateway Corridor." The corridor represents the first urban roadway within the study area, from the north which provides linkage with the minor recreation corridor into Forster Ranch. Inasmuch, it should also provide a transitional character that indicates a change from urban to recreational uses.

## Planting Concept

The planting concept for Camino de Estrella/Camino de los Mares will incorporate formally-aligned street trees of *Podocarpus gracilor* (Fern Pine) to the Forster Ranch limit in the inland area.

The median planting provides streetscape continuity to this corridor with a consistent use of *Phoenix canariensis* (Canary Island Date Palms) as the dominant street tree. On a case by case basis, if *Phoenix canariensis* succumbs to disease, one *Phoenix canariensis* will be replaced by up to 4 *Washingtonia Robusta* (Mexican Fan Palm). The urban portion plantings will employ regular spacing and a formal alignment. The recreation section does not employ this tree due to the rural character created in the inland. However, future intersection plantings or rehabilitation within the inland should incorporate the *Phoenix canariensis* (Canary Island Date Palm) for overall consistency throughout the corridor.

Medians and other appropriate locations shall be stamped concrete in a twelve-inch (12") square-tile pattern, with a terra-cotta color, where the median is four (4') feet or less.

**Plant Palette**  
**Camino de Los Mares - "The Gateway Corridor"**

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**Urban Corridor**

**Trees**

*Podocarpus gracilior*  
Fern Pine

o c. parkway formal alignment  
and spacing dominance street tree

*Platanus acerfolia*  
London Plane Tree

Parkway informal alignment as  
secondary street tree within development  
edge

*Ficus rubiginosa*  
Rusty Leaf Fig

Secondary street tree in transition areas

**Shrubs/Groundcovers**

*Raphiolepis indica*  
'Jack Evans'  
India Hawthorn

Parkways/Development Edge/Medians

*Juniperus sabina*  
'Buffalo'  
Juniper

*Nerium oleander*  
'Petite salmon'  
Oleander

*Pittosporum tobira*  
'Variegata'  
Tobira

**Median**

**Trees**

*Phoenix canariensis*  
Canary Island Date Palm

Informal groupings minimum 20'  
brown trunk height primary street tree

**Shrubs/Groundcovers**

Refer to above list