

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

DATE: May 7, 2009

TO: The City Council, City of Los Angeles
c/o City Clerk, Room 395
Attention: Honorable Wendy Greuel, Chair
Transportation CommitteeFROM:  For Rita L. Robinson, General Manager
Department of TransportationSUBJECT: **ORANGE LINE BIKE PATH MAINTENANCE – CF 07-3885 S-1****SUMMARY**

This report provides the Transportation Committee with background and information regarding the maintenance and transient encampment issues on the Orange Line Bicycle Path in response to Motion (Cardenas-Greuel).

RECOMMENDATION

That the Transportation Committee APPROVE the development of an Orange Line Bicycle Path Task Force that will meet quarterly to review any issues relative to the path and continue to provide solutions for their resolution.

DISCUSSIONBackground

The City of Los Angeles was granted funding and began development of a bicycle path in the Chandler Boulevard right-of-way (ROW) as early as 1999. As Metro moved forward with the concept of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project in the ROW, DOT's Bikeways staff worked with the Metro Bicycle Program to move forward the concept of adding a bicycle and pedestrian path to the overall project. Metro supported the idea, with the provisions that City provide the additional funding for the project and agree to maintain the bike path, which is on Metro's property. The City agreed to these terms and worked with Metro and the BRT's design/builder on the development and construction of the bicycle facility.

As the project neared completion, DOT Bikeways staff found that many items did not meet the specifications required and could not provide acceptance and maintenance of the bicycle path at that time. When Metro opened the Orange Line BRT and Bicycle Path in October of 2005, the City and Metro had not yet come to agreement on several construction items that posed a liability to the City. By August 2007, many of these issues were resolved and the City officially accepted and agreed to maintain the bicycle path through a license agreement with Metro.

Although some maintenance of the bicycle path had been performed during the year following the opening of the bicycle path as part of the construction warranty, a significant lapsing period followed where no maintenance occurred. It was subsequently recognized that any maintenance plan would first need to provide a start-up period where landscaping could be brought back to original specifications.

During this time, DOT Bikeways staff worked on developing an agreement with Recreation and Parks (RAP) staff to take on maintenance of the bicycle path with funding provided by DOT. RAP had been performing this function in this manner for six other bike paths throughout the City, including the Los Angeles River. Unfortunately, RAP's cost estimate was higher than comparable work that RAP and others were already performing for the City. Therefore, DOT solicited bids from the Department of General Services' (GSD) list of on-call contractors and entered an interim contract with Sunscapes Landscape Company. GSD's list of on-call contractors has expired. Therefore, Sunscapes currently maintains the bike path through an Authority for Expenditure (AFE), which allows a maximum expenditure of \$25,000 and covers only a minimal level of service.

Current Status

DOT conducted two meetings to resolve the issues associated with the bicycle path. The first was held on April 30 and included representatives from the Bureau of Street Services, the City Attorney's Office, the LAPD, the Los Angeles County Sheriff, Metro, Sunscapes, and Council Districts 2 and 6.

The second meeting was held in the field on May 7 and included an on-site review of the issues with all affected agencies. The bicycle path had been cleaned by volunteers in coordination with LAPD over the previous weekend. Those in attendance walked and drove the bicycle path between Tyrone Avenue and Sepulveda Boulevard, pointing out problem areas and recommending solutions, including those associated with landscaping, graffiti control, trash removal, and transient presence. The following is a list of action items to be followed up on by each agency:

- Metro – Per the existing License Agreement between the City and Metro, Metro will review and approve any new landscape designs which would be implemented in a long-term effort to eliminate hiding areas for the transient population in the vicinity of the bicycle path.
- Landscape Contractor – Will develop a short-term solution and cost estimate for landscape trimming and cutting back to eliminate hiding areas for the transient population in the vicinity of the bicycle path. This work is not part of the current contract.
- Council District 6 – Will investigate funding and authority to pay the landscape contractor for additional work not included in the current contract as mentioned above. Will work with Costco on the placement of a screen on their southern fence to prevent litter from their refuse area from blowing onto the bicycle path. Will also work with the property owner east of Costco to trim a tree on their property which provides the shaded area preferred by transients on the landscaped ROW.
- Bureau of Street Services and DOT – Will develop a longer-term landscape plan to replace some of the existing plant materials (as previously mentioned) to be approved by Metro.
- City Attorney/LAPD/Bureau of Street Services – Will continue to address and enforce transient concerns.

- New Directions for Youth – Will continue ongoing graffiti removal in the area and to provide the landscape contractor with asphalt sealer for graffiti removal on the bike path.

Fiscal Impact

The landscape contractor will provide the City with a cost estimate to perform all the changes recommended during the field visit. At this time, their maintenance contract has a cap of \$25,000 from April 1 to June 1, 2009 which includes maintenance on the ROW from the Burbank City limit to Canoga Avenue. Currently, authority does not exist to extend the current contract or to pay for additional landscape removal or planting recommended during the field visit. DOT staff is in the process of securing additional funds and authority to amend the AFE. An RFP has been issued to award a long-term landscape and maintenance contract for a five year period; however, this contract will not be in place until at least this summer.

Coordination

DOT has hosted two meetings – one in the DOT offices on April 30, and one in field on May 7 - to discuss and review the issues associated with the path. Participating organizations included staff from Council District 6, Council District 2, the Bureau of Street Services, the City Attorney's Office, DOT, LAPD, RAP, the County Sheriff, Metro, Sunscapes, and New Directions for Youth.