



CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA REQUEST

AGENDA OF:	07-27-10	AGENDA REQUEST NO:	II-C
INITIATED BY:	KAREN DALY, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT:	ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER
PRESENTED BY:	KAREN DALY, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER	DEPARTMENT HEAD:	N/A
		ADDITIONAL DEPARTMENT HEAD (S):	N/A

SUBJECT / PROCEEDING: DISCUSS PROPOSED STREETScape POLICY

EXHIBITS: DRAFT STREETScape POLICY

CLEARANCES		APPROVAL	
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LEGAL:	N/A	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:	N/A
PURCHASING:	N/A	ASST. CITY MANAGER:	KAREN DALY <i>kd</i>
BUDGET:	N/A	CITY MANAGER:	ALLEN BOGARD <i>Allen Bogard</i>

BUDGET	
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EXPENDITURE REQUIRED: \$	N/A
AMOUNT BUDGETED/REALLOCATION: \$	N/A
ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION: \$	N/A

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Review and discuss the proposed Streetscape Policy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the City's FY10 Strategic Projects is the creation of a comprehensive streetscape policy. The appearance of the City's streetscapes has become a signature identifying element for Sugar Land residents and businesses. In accordance with the Comprehensive Plan Goal of Safe and Beautiful City, the City has worked on creating standards for the physical appearance of the streetscapes in Sugar Land. Begun in 2004 as a strategic project, many related policies have been adopted: Streetlight Reimbursement Policy, Urban Beautification Policy, Tree Trimming Policy, Streetlight Banner and Flag Policy, Design Standards, Landscape Master Plans and Water Cost Share Program. All of these policies and programs impact the appearance and maintenance of the City's rights-of-way.

As the City's street network continues to grow, the need to ensure standards for landscaping, lighting, entryways, tree replacement, ROW use, irrigation management, screen walls, signalization, and maintenance becomes more evident. This policy gives guidance to the construction and maintenance of the City's streetscapes.

The project began in October 2009. The Council Task Force was formed and included Council Members Chaumette, Olson and Schiff. The Council Task Force held their first meeting on December 10, 2009. The purpose of the initial meeting was to provide an overview and get concurrence on the direction for development of the policy. In January 2010, the Task Force covered the proposed streetscape classifications as well as preliminary cost information. Additional comparative information from FCCA was obtained and shared at their March 5, 2010 meeting. The Task Force initially reviewed the water cost share program and gave direction to transition it to a water conservation program. The Council Task Force continued to meet and reviewed each policy component: landscape, water conservation, traffic signals, street lights, flags & banners, screening, hardscape. Now that the Task Force has given direction for the policy, the cost impact of ongoing maintenance and operations has been developed.

The purpose of the workshop is to review the policy components with the City Council as well as the cost implications. After the policy review, the next step would be to create a transition team with the impacted HOA's/POA's to form a transition plan before adoption of the Streetscape Policy.

EXHIBITS

7/21/10 DRAFT

POLICY NUMBER _____

Date Adopted _____

Date Effective _____

RESOLUTION NO. ##-##

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SUGAR LAND, TEXAS
ADOPTING A POLICY FOR STREETSCAPE STANDARDS IN THE CITY'S RIGHTS-OF-WAY.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF SUGAR LAND, TEXAS:

That the City Council hereby adopts the following policy for Streetscape Standards in the public rights-of-way.

CITY COUNCIL POLICY
STREETSCAPE PROGRAM

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish uniform standards for the landscaping and maintenance of City rights-of-way (ROW). As the City's street network continues to grow, the need to ensure standards for landscaping, street lighting, entryways, tree management, ROW use, irrigation management, screening, traffic signal poles, and maintenance becomes more evident. This policy gives guidance to the construction and maintenance of the City's streetscapes.

SCOPE

The appearance of the City's streetscapes has become a signature element for Sugar Land residents, businesses, and visitors. In accordance with the Comprehensive Plan Goal of Safe and Beautiful City, the City has worked on creating standards for the physical appearance of the streetscapes in Sugar Land. Begun in 2004, many related policies have been adopted by the City Council and internally: Urban Beautification Policy, Tree Trimming Ordinance, Streetlight Banner and Flag Policy, Design Standards, Landscape Master Plans and Water Cost Share Program. All of these policies and programs impact the appearance and maintenance of the City's ROW.

This policy replaces the existing Council-adopted policies regarding Urban Beautification (4000-05) and Water Cost Share Program (8000-08).

CATEGORIES

In order to distinguish between the various streetscape treatments along the City's roadways, four categories were developed that help delineate the different landscape and maintenance standards that are utilized. Those four categories are:

Imperial – This category is designated for the streetscape treatments of areas directly adjacent to interstate and state highways. Ultimately designed for harsh conditions, these areas provide a dramatic green aesthetic to an area where high volumes of traffic travel at higher speeds. These roadways are US59, 90A and 99.

Highway 6 – Because infrastructure features on Highway 6 are a hybrid of both the Imperial and Signature categories, Highway 6 has its own designation. This designation reflects the important role Highway 6 plays as the major corridor for the city.

Signature – The arterials in the City have become Sugar Land’s trademark. These arterials make it easy to distinguish which neighborhoods are located in the city limits. Signature routes are Austin, Burney, Colony Lakes, Commerce Green, Commonwealth, Dulles, Dairy Ashford, Eldridge, First Colony, Jess Pirtle, Lexington, Sugar Creek, Sugar Lakes, Sweetwater, University, West Airport, and Williams Trace.

Classic – The Classic category is entryways into neighborhoods and esplanades along collector streets that are traditionally landscaped by the adjacent homeowner associations as an entry feature and amenity for subdivisions. It is also reserved for drainage easements maintained by the City.

POLICY

The City is the chief steward of the ROW within the City of Sugar Land city limits and is responsible for maintaining all public infrastructure within the ROW. The City’s ROW contains many utilities and system improvements. Coordination and standardization helps manage and protect the public investment located in the ROW.

- A. **Street Lighting** - The installation of street lighting is mandatory along all City streets and the extraterritorial jurisdiction in accordance with the City’s Development Code and Design Standards. All street lighting systems must include only light fixtures available to the City through CenterPoint Energy. Street lighting must be placed in accordance with, and must, operate at the photometric intensity recommended by the electric service provider in accordance with the Illumination Engineering Society (IES) and the City’s Design Standards. No installation of private lighting systems within the ROW of the City and its extraterritorial jurisdiction is allowed in accordance with the City’s Design Standards. As replacement of grandfathered systems is needed, all systems must be replaced with CenterPoint Energy systems. For existing private lighting systems, a policy for reimbursement is attached as Appendix A.

Imperial: The City owns private lighting systems located along the major highways in Sugar Land. These systems are maintained by the City and have been approved by TxDOT.

Hwy 6: The lighting along Hwy 6 will use the black decorative street lights in accordance with the City’s Design Standards and as approved by TxDOT.

Signature: Two standard lighting systems, approved by CenterPoint, are allowed in the ROW: a black decorative 30’ cobra head system and a black decorative 12’ lamppost system.

Classic: Two standard lighting systems, supplied by CenterPoint, are allowed in the ROW: a standard 30’ cobra head system and a standard 12’ noncobra lamppost system.

The City will allow outside entities to request a changeout from the standard. If approved, the requesting party is responsible for all costs associated with the planning, design, and construction of the new lighting facilities, including all costs associated with additional lights that may be required to keep lighting levels at the appropriate standards. The requesting party may apply to the City's Cooperative CIP program to assist with funding. If the City's annual allotment from CenterPoint becomes available for residential changeouts, the City may use it to help outside entities offset associated changeout costs. Upon changeout, the City will pay for the operational and maintenance costs associated with the lighting system.

- B. **Landscaping** – Each classification of streetscape – Imperial, Highway 6, Signature, and Classic – has unique levels of landscaping and maintenance. The following defines the distinctive characteristics of each level:

Imperial - Roadways designated as the Imperial category will include: shade trees, ornamental trees, large shrub masses, climbing vines on walls, flowering plants for seasonal interest, ground cover plants, and ornamental grasses. The plantings will be designed in curvilinear/freeform spacing to allow for the loss of trees or plants without leaving an obvious gap in the planting. Plants shall be selected for hardiness, low maintenance, and low water requirements. Planting beds and trees, but not turf, will be irrigated with drip line or spray heads. The City is responsible for design, construction, and maintenance of the landscaping and irrigation.

Maintenance will be performed at 44 cycles per year and include mowing, trimming, edging, weed control, insect control, disease control, litter pick-up, fertilization, tree trimming, plant pruning, irrigation water monitoring and irrigation repair. The irrigation system will have remote access and central control.

Highway 6 – The Highway 6 category will include: shade trees, ornamental trees, minimal shrub and ground cover plantings primarily near intersections, and possibly vines on sound walls. City or another entity such as a developer, HOA, POA or other may be responsible for the design, construction and maintenance.

Maintenance will be performed at 44 cycles annually and will include mowing, trimming, edging, litter pick-up, weed control, tree trimming, plant pruning, irrigation water monitoring, and irrigation repair. Irrigation of Highway 6 can include drip or spray irrigation of trees, shrubs, and turf. The irrigation system may have remote access and central control by the City, HOA or POA.

This level includes a number of roads with regularly spaced lines of trees along the parkway or in the medians. Often trees will be missing in the tree line due to death of the tree from vehicle crashes, road or utilities repair, addition of turn lanes, or disease or natural causes. Trees that are missing will only be replaced if funding can be secured through insurance claims or contractor replacement as a result of their road or utility work. The City will not fund replacement planting except as part of a capital construction project.

Signature - Roadways designated in the Signature category will include: shade trees, ornamental trees, minimal shrub and ground cover plantings primarily near intersections, and possibly vines on sound walls. City or another entity such as a developer, HOA, POA or other may be responsible for the design, construction, and maintenance, and irrigation at the Signature level.

Maintenance will be performed at 44 cycles annually and will include mowing, trimming, edging, litter pick-up, weed control, tree trimming, plant pruning, irrigation monitoring, and irrigation repair. Irrigation of Signature level roads may include drip or spray irrigation of trees, shrubs, and turf. The irrigation system may have remote access and central control by the City. However, it is likely that the irrigation system is monitored and controlled by an HOA, POA, or other entity.

This level includes a number of roads with regularly spaced lines of trees along the parkway or in the medians. Often trees will be missing in the tree line due to death of the tree from vehicle crashes, road or utilities repair, addition of turn lanes, or disease or natural causes. Trees that are missing will only be replaced if funding can be secured through insurance claims or contractor replacement as a result of their road or utility work. The City will not fund replacement planting except as part of a capital construction project.

If landscape and irrigation improvements are initiated by a private entity, they must receive prior approval from the City for the improvements in the ROW. A permit must be issued for the improvements in order to be eligible for reimbursement.

A reimbursement program can be approved annually by the City Council and will be offered to HOAs, POAs, or other City Council-approved entities that are responsible for landscape maintenance on City-owned ROW at the Signature level. The eligibility for the reimbursement is based on this roadway classification. The reimbursement amount will be based on the number of square feet of ROW maintained by the entity. In order to continue to participate in the landscape reimbursement program, replacement of landscaping that has been previously installed in the ROW must be performed within 60 days of construction completion or the incident causing the need for replacement.

It is the City's intent to implement a transition plan for entities participating in the landscape reimbursement program.

Classic - Roadways designated as Classic can include shade trees and ornamental trees, with very minimal landscaping around signs or intersections. Irrigation systems may exist in the ROW but they belong to an entity other than the City. If the ROW is maintained by an HOA, POA, or other entity, it is solely at their expense.

If the ROW is not maintained by another entity, maintenance may be performed by the City. The maintenance at the Classic level is 24 cycles per year. It consists of mowing, trimming, and litter pick-up.

- C. **Flags and Banners** – A seasonal banner program has been established by the City of Sugar Land. Banners will be placed on streetlight posts that have been installed according to the specifications established by CenterPoint. New streetlights along “Signature” roadways will be installed at visible intersections according to the banner specifications as specified in the Flag and Banner Policy. The City’s flag stands will be placed along “Signature” roadways according to the established policy.
- D. **Traffic Signal Poles** – Decorative (Black) Traffic Signal intersection poles will be the standard within the incorporated City. Specifications are located within the City Standard Specifications. Galvanized steel traffic signal intersection poles will be the standard within the Industrial Park. Existing galvanized steel intersection poles, not in the Industrial Park, will be included in the City’s Capital Improvement Program based on its life expectancy. Life expectancy will be determined by the date it was installed plus twenty (20) years as a minimum.
- E. **Hardscape** - Hardscape elements include sidewalks, curb ramps, concrete pavers and other hardscape structures such as signs or neighborhood entry features.

Curb Ramps - Curb ramps must meet current accessibility standards. Truncated dome pavers are standard and will be Pavestone “River Red” or similar.

Structures - The right-of-way should be kept clear of obstructions. A Freestanding sign, wall, fence, neighborhood entry feature, or other permanent structure must not be placed or located within a public easement or public right-of-way unless the City gives its written consent to the encroachment through the issuance of a permit.

Star and Crown Columns can be used by the City to help motorists and residents identify roadways and entryways of Sugar Land.

Concrete pavers -The City is installing concrete pavers on median tips and at intersections for beautification and functionality. Stained or colored concrete may be installed in lieu of pavers where the distance between the backs of curb is 12” or less. The stain color must match the standard paver color – “Antique Red”.

- F. **Water Conservation** - Water conservation should be emphasized with all landscaping and irrigation projects, through the use of plants that require minimal water usage (after plant establishment) and properly positioned and angled sprinklers. In order to conserve water, irrigation shall not spray onto roadways. All ROW irrigation systems shall follow TCEQ standards including having a licensed irrigation technician or licensed irrigator on-site when an irrigation system is installed, maintained, altered, repaired, or serviced.

Imperial - The Imperial irrigation is controlled by software connected to a weather station. This system also provides the ability to monitor water usage, to automatically shut off irrigation in the event of rain or major leaks and breaks and to ensure watering only occurs between the off-peak times. The Imperial classification consists of drip sprinklers, bubblers and limited pop-up sprays. Imperial classification irrigation is only used for bed and tree irrigation and does not include watering of turf.

Highway 6 - The Highway 6 classification includes the irrigation of areas owned or maintained by the City of Sugar Land, property owners associations and homeowners associations. The sprinkler apparatuses include spray heads, pop ups, drip, and bubblers.

All entities irrigating in City ROW shall provide plans and drawings for permitting new irrigation installations with the City according to TCEQ regulations. All plans shall include and show location of an automatic controller and sensors that prevent the operation of irrigation during rainfall or in freezing weather.

Signature - The Signature classification includes the irrigation of areas owned or maintained by the City of Sugar Land, homeowners associations and other entities. The sprinkler apparatuses include spray heads, pop ups, drip, and bubblers.

All entities irrigating in City ROW shall provide plans and drawings for permitting new irrigation installations with the City according to TCEQ regulations. All plans shall include and show location of an automatic controller and sensors that prevent the operation of irrigation during rainfall or in freezing weather.

The City will make available a water cost reimbursement program to HOAs irrigating the City's ROW. The reimbursement rate will be established by the City and will be based on drought tolerant materials utilizing smart-meter technology.

In order to maximize water efficiency, the City will make available a CIP cost-share program to allow HOAs and other entities to change out plant materials in the Signature category to achieve improved water conservation. HOAs will be provided with a list of plants from which they can choose to plant in esplanades and other landscaped areas. The plants on this list will consist of those native to this region and climate or are otherwise conservative in water usage.

Classic - The Classic category includes minimal to no irrigation. The majority of Classic ROW areas are only landscaped with turf and do not require irrigation. The areas that are irrigated are limited to HOA and POA property for small areas such as monuments or small decorative entrances to subdivisions.

- G. **Screening** – Screening creates a visual barrier between adjacent uses. In addition to screening required by City's Land Development Code, screening or buffering may be achieved with existing vegetation, fences, walls, earthen berms, hedges, new landscaping or a combination that provide an effective visual barrier during all seasons.

During a Capital Improvement Project, it may be necessary to include screening as part of the project if residential areas are impacted. The impact shall be defined by the engineering consultant during design and shall provide a final recommendation to mitigate the impact. This recommendation must be approved by the City Council. This can be addressed by Hardscape or Vegetation or a combination of both. The following standards shall apply to screen or buffer materials:

Hardscape - The standard appearance for hardscape shall be precast concrete panel walls or “Rock Style”. The panels shall be a dark brown in color (Sherwin Williams 6089 or approved equal) and the fence posts shall be crème/beige/off-white (or approved equal). The height of the wall shall be a maximum of eight (8) feet unless otherwise determined by the design consultant.

If the owner(s) desires to modify the hardscape standard, the City can elect to pay the owner(s) the cost of the standard hardscape and the owner(s) will agree to build the wall. The wall shall be built to a recommended height by the owner’s engineering consultant. The City shall have a right to review and approve the final design prior to construction of the wall. The wall shall be constructed on private property and not in public ROW.

Vegetation - Screening can lessen the visual intrusion that may otherwise occur within an urbanized area. Even minimal screening can provide an impression of separation of spaces, and more extensive screening can shield one use from the visual impact of an adjacent use. New plant materials shall consist of a combination of deciduous, evergreen, and ornamental trees and shrubs at a density that, at maturity, provides a year round screen and buffer of the subdivision from adjacent roadways and shall satisfy the height and size requirements of the City’s Development Code at installation.

Earthen Berms – Berms may be used in combination with hardscape or vegetative screening. They must be completely covered with turf or other vegetation and shall not exceed a three (3) to one (1) slope to allow for maintenance and mowing.

H. **Tree Trimming** – Trees located in the City’s ROW represent an important aspect of the City’s streetscape. Tree trimming and inspection will occur based on the roadway’s classification.

Imperial: Streets designated Imperial have large sections of ROW and all plantings will be strategically placed so as to never interfere with the visibility triangle. Trees in these sections will be monitored on an annual basis by City crews and inspected/trimmed on a routine basis by City contractors. These sections will be inspected and trimmed, depending on need, in a five (5) year rotation.

Highway 6: Highway 6 has large sections of ROW and all plantings will be strategically placed so as to never interfere with the visibility triangle. Trees in these sections will be monitored on an annual basis by City crews and inspected/trimmed on a routine basis by City contractors. These sections will be inspected and trimmed, depending on need, in a three (3) year rotation.

Signature: Streets designated as Signature utilize understory plantings and shrubs. Trees planted in these areas should not interfere with street lighting, pedestrian walkways, or the visibility triangle. Trees in these sections will be monitored on an annual basis by City crews and inspected/trimmed on a routine basis. These sections will be inspected and trimmed, depending on need by City contractors or HOA/POAs participating in the Landscape Cost Share Program.

Classic: Generally streets designated Classic have little existing tree inventory. Entryways typically utilize understory plantings and shrubs. Trees planted in these areas should not interfere with street lighting or the visibility triangle. Trees in these sections will be monitored on annual basis and trimmed as occasion may require.

Transition Plan

The City recognizes that this policy is a substantial change from the City's existing policies and practices. For that reason, it is the City's intent to develop a transition plan in partnership with impacted HOAs and POAs to ensure that the new policy continues to promote and maintain the beautiful streetscapes in Sugar Land. The transition plan will have a 5-year sunset provision should the implementation not be complete at the end of five years. The transition plan concept will be reviewed with the City Council prior to approving the Streetscape Policy.

Appendix A

Grandfathering of Existing Private Lighting Systems

The City has previously provided prorated reimbursements to requesting organizations that own private lighting systems used to light the ROW. These systems and the associated reimbursements will be grandfathered under the following program:

- 1. The reimbursement will be for the operational cost of the equivalent number of standard cobra head streetlights necessary to properly light a street to the City's minimum requirements.**
- 2. The organization will be responsible for the maintenance and operation of the decorative lighting system within the ROW and must keep those lighting systems in good working order and aesthetic condition.**
- 3. The organization will complete a minimum of one inspection per month of all street lighting to assure proper operation. All light outages identified via the inspection program or reported by others will be repaired within 72 hours after notification.**
- 4. The organization will provide annual inspection of all lighting fixtures to evaluate the structural condition and the aesthetic appearance. The organization will take immediate action to correct any structural defects found as a result of this inspection. All work identified to maintain the aesthetics of the fixtures would be completed by the organization within the subsequent year. The results of this inspection will be sent to the Public Works Department.**
- 5. The Public Works Department will strictly enforce the provisions within the program through random inspections to ensure compliance. If the organization does not comply with the terms and conditions of the program, the City may withhold a prorated portion of the reimbursement payment based on the time period the organization did not meet the terms and conditions of the program.**
- 6. This policy will be administered via annual agreements between the City and the organizations. These agreements will continue for successive one-year terms unless either party terminates the agreement by giving the other written notice 120 days prior to the end of the term. Additionally, all street lighting reimbursement agreements are subject to the annual appropriation of funding by the City Council.**