

**North Embarcadero Visionary Plan
Joint Powers Authority**

DATE: June 2, 2011

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF DESIGN CONCEPT

- A. NORTH HARBOR DRIVE STREET TREES (REVISED)**
- B. WEST BROADWAY CENTER MEDIAN LIGHTING: FINISH**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Design work on North Embarcadero Visionary Plan Phase 1 is being refined in response to the conditions of the Coastal Development Permit (CDP) authorized by the California Coastal Commission on April 13, 2011. The Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement gives the Joint Powers Authority (JPA) "the power to approve design concepts and to establish design guidelines and policies to be used in the completion of the Design and Construction for the North Embarcadero area". The JPA Board is now being asked to approve design elements which have been revised and refined from concepts approved in 2008.

The Canary Island Date Palm and the Mexican Fan Palm had been selected and approved by the JPA Board in 2008 to be placed in the public right-of-way on the west and east sides of North Harbor Drive, respectively. However those species are listed as invasive species by the California Invasive Plant Council (CAL-IPC), so their use is prohibited by Special Condition No. 7 of the Coastal Development Permit. In compliance with this Special Condition, Staff recommends the use of the Medjool Date Palm on both sides of North Harbor Drive. To increase certainty of the continuity of the tree planting palette in future phases of NEVP, the JPA Board may consider preparation of a Cultural Landscape Report to establish with the Coastal Commission the historic and cultural basis for a plant palette including specific palm tree species currently on the CAL-IPC list.

Also in 2008, the JPA Board approved the design of custom-designed light fixtures in the median of West Broadway. Since that time, the design team has refined the design of those fixtures. Staff recommends a subtle silver-green finish for the signature lighting.

With the approval of the revised design concepts contained in this staff report, all major design elements of the Phase 1 design will have been endorsed by the JPA Board.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the following design elements:

- A. North Harbor Drive Street Trees: The use of Medjool Date Palms in groups of two, approximately 67.5 feet on center in the public right-of-way on the west and east sides of North Harbor Drive.
- B. West Broadway Center Median Lighting: Finish: The use of a silver-green anodized finish on the signature light fixtures in the West Broadway median.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The proposed revised design elements are included in the project budget. The proposed change in tree species will result in a reduction in the project cost for NEVP Phase 1.

DISCUSSION:

A. North Harbor Drive Street Trees

Design concepts for the street trees along North Harbor Drive were approved by the JPA Board on May 29, 2008 and included:

The use of Mexican Fan Palms (*Washingtonia Robusta*) in groups of two, approximately 30 feet on center in the public right-of-way on the east side of the reconstructed Harbor Drive.

The use of Canary Island Date Palms (*Phoenix Canariensis*) in single placement approximately 45 feet on center in the public right-of-way on the west side of the reconstructed Harbor Drive.

Mexican Fan Palms and Canary Island Date Palms were selected as street trees in the early planning phases of the North Embarcadero Visionary Plan, and are found throughout the San Diego Bay waterfront. However these trees are listed as Invasive Species and are not allowed to be used on the project as a condition of issuance of the CDP. A revised Final Landscape Plan must be submitted for review and approval by the Coastal Commission Executive Director. To this end, the design team has selected an alternative tree species and a revised spacing.

The recommended tree species is the Medjool Date Palm to be planted on both sides of Harbor Drive. Due to the smaller trunk size and tree canopy of the Medjool as compared to the Canary Island Date Palm, the design team recommends a revised spacing that arranges pairs of Medjool Date Palms at 67.5' on center aligned on both sides of the street. This spacing corresponds with the dimensional control plan that was developed for the Esplanade, Harbor Drive and the West Broadway Plaza.

The following drawing is included to illustrate the recommendation:



Because the Final Landscape Plan will be subject to Coastal Commission staff review and approval, the design team may make minor modifications to the tree spacing or locations if necessary.

It is important to note that the CDP condition states that “No plant species listed as problematic and/or invasive by the California Native Plant Society, the California Invasive Plant Council (CAL-IPC) Inventory Database, **or as may be identified from time to time by the State of California** shall be employed or allowed to naturalize or persist on the site.” The tree species recommended by staff is not currently listed, however there appears to be some risk of it being listed in the future and subsequently unavailable for use in future phases. Staff recommends preparation of a Cultural Landscape Report that would substantiate the basis for using the recommended trees in future phases of the NEVP.

West Broadway Center Median Lighting: Finish

On September 25, 2008, the Board approved signature light poles in the median of West Broadway for lighting the street and up-lighting the palm trees. The following rendering shows the approved fixtures:



The design team has selected a subtle silver green anodized finish – a unique color to complement the unique shape – combined to celebrate the importance of Broadway as San Diego’s ‘main street’. The color was derived from hues found in the San Diego landscape. Staff recommends approval of the finish as a refinement to the previous action.

Member Agency Attorneys' Comments:

Not applicable.

Environmental Review:

The proposed Board action is not subject to CEQA, as amended.

Equal Opportunity Program:

Not applicable.

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