

TO: Andrew P. Powers, City Manager

FROM: Clifford G. Finley, Public Works Director

DATE: May 21, 2024

SUBJECT: Woodcrete Fence Replacement Project (CI 5435)

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Authorize staff to advertise the Woodcrete Fence Replacement Project (CI 5435) for construction bids.
2. Find that the project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to 14 CCR 15302.

LEVINE ACT ITEM: No

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

No Additional Funding Requested. Minimal staff time and costs required to advertise for bids. \$500,000 is included in the Adopted FY 2023-24 Landscape Fund Capital Budget. The estimated total project cost is \$333,000.

BACKGROUND:

On January 14, 2021, a fast-moving wildfire, called the Erbes Fire, burned areas of the City near the Sunset Hills neighborhood east of the 23 Freeway. Driven by strong Santa Ana Winds, the Erbes Fire quickly consumed approximately 250 acres of natural open space along both sides of Erbes Road. While no structures were damaged, approximately 1,100 feet of the City's vinyl, split-rail fence located along the west side of Erbes Road between McCrea Road and the 23 Freeway overpass was destroyed (Attachment #1). Due to the fire's relatively small size and limited overall damage, a State of Emergency was not declared. Therefore, neither the Federal Emergency Management Agency nor the California Office of Emergency Services funding is available to help offset replacement costs.

The fence was originally constructed in the early 1980s by the developer as a condition of development in association with the adjacent residential tract. The fence serves various purposes: it enhances the aesthetic appeal along the roadway, prevents off-road vehicles from entering adjacent open space, and provides pedestrian protection from steep drop-off slopes situated behind the

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sidewalk in certain areas. The destroyed sections of the fence have not yet been replaced. As a precautionary measure, staff has positioned warning signs in these areas to alert pedestrians about the steep drop-offs. In addition, portions of the fence not damaged by the fire are deteriorating and in disrepair due to overall age and weathering.

During development of the FY 2023-2025 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Budget, \$500,000 was budgeted in FY 2023-24 for the Woodcrete Fence Replacement Project (CI 5435) to facilitate fence replacements at various locations throughout the City. In the past, the City and Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency (COSCA) have used both standard wood and woodcrete materials to construct and repair split-rail fencing adjacent to open space. Woodcrete material is constructed out of concrete, which is designed to resemble wood. Staff has utilized the woodcrete material in areas throughout the City in the past due to its durability, however obtaining woodcrete has become challenging due to limited availability and rising costs. Staff recently received an estimate for 3,500 feet of woodcrete fencing including materials and installation and the cost was over \$1,000,000.

Based on the high costs and limited availability, and the fact that other sections of Erbes Road in the area of this project do not feature woodcrete, COSCA and City staff have agreed to use standard wood fencing for this project. This will be consistent with many other areas in the City that feature wood split-rail fencing when adjacent to open space.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

This project will replace both the fire-damaged and deteriorated sections of the existing vinyl fence (approximately 3,500 feet) with a new wood fence per COSCA specifications and details, which also meets City building standards for split-rail wood fencing. The new fence will improve pedestrian safety, and better match other COSCA fences adjacent to open space. The project limits are within Landscape Zone 25 of the City's Landscape District.

Staff completed the design with in-house resources. The project plans and specifications are available for review upon request to the Public Works Department by e-mail at publicworks@toaks.org or by phone at (805) 449-2400. Staff recommends that the project be advertised for bids. Once bids are received, staff will seek the award of the construction contract at a future City Council meeting. The tentative schedule for completion of the project is as follows:

Bid Opening	May/June 2024
Award of Construction Contract	July 2024
Start of Construction	August 2024
Project Completion	December 2024

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The estimated costs are as follows:

1. Construction Estimate (including contingency)	\$330,000
2. City Furnished Materials/Services	\$3,000
Total Estimated Project Cost	\$333,000

The project is categorically exempt from CEQA per section 15302 (replacement/reconstruction of existing facilities).

Community Outreach: Staff has established a public outreach plan for the project, with particular focus on the residents located adjacent to the project as well as the general public. Various communications tools and strategies, including community meetings (if needed), website updates, and social media posts will continue to be utilized to inform the public and receive feedback. A dedicated project website has been created: www.toaks.co/erbesfence where updated project information will continue to be provided throughout the construction phase of the project.

This project meets City Council's Top Ten Priorities #6, "Public Works + Infrastructure Investments across the community".

CIP PROJECT PRIORITY (as outlined in FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25 CIP Program Budget)

Priority Three – Nice to do and would contribute to quality of life, but not essential.

COUNCIL GOAL COMPLIANCE:

Meets the following City Council goals:

C. Operate City government in a fiscally and managerially responsible and prudent manner to ensure that the City of Thousand Oaks remains one of California's most desirable places to live, work, visit, recreate, and raise a family.

F. Provide and enhance essential infrastructure to ensure that the goals and policies of the Thousand Oaks General Plan are carried out and the City retains its role and reputation as a leader in protecting the environment and preserving limited natural resources.

PREPARED BY: Saeed Zolfaghari, Associate Engineer

Attachments:

Attachment #1 – Vicinity & Location Maps

Documents Provided Under Separate Cover:

#1 – Final Design, Plans and Specifications