MEMORANDUM FOR
CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF NOVEMBER 13, 2007
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TO: Members of the City Council
VIA: Jeffrey Foltz, Interim City Administrator
FROM: Timothy M. Kiser, PE, Public Works Director/City Engineer
SUBJECT: East Main / Idaho-Maryland Intersection Improvement Project

RECOMMENDATION: That Council 1) review City’s Development Review Committee (DRC) preferred landscaping option for the proposed roundabout and provide direction to staff, and 2) adopt the findings and the Mitigated Negative Declaration in accordance with provisions of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

BACKGROUND: When the Golden Center Freeway and its ramps were constructed, current traffic volumes were not anticipated. Subsequent growth in Grass Valley and Western Nevada County has resulted in several problematic intersections. The East Main/Idaho-Maryland intersection is fundamental to traffic patterns in Grass Valley and currently operates at a low Level of Service (LOS) during peak hour times. Pursuant to Council direction, staff solicited professional engineering services to evaluate and design a single lane roundabout for this intersection. On May 23, 2006, Council approved a professional services agreement with Whitlock & Weinberger Transportation, Inc. (W-Trans) of Santa Rosa for the civil and traffic engineering services for evaluation and design of a modern roundabout.

The proposed project consists of replacing the existing all-way stop controlled intersection of East Main Street and Idaho-Maryland Road with a modern roundabout, including pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The proposed roundabout has been designed to safely and efficiently accommodate existing traffic volumes, while also providing additional capacity for future traffic growth at this critical intersection (See Attachment A).

The improvement plans are approximately 90% complete, and with the geometrics of the roundabout fixed, proposed landscaping options can be evaluated. The City’s consultant has developed three options that were presented to the DRC on October 23rd for review and recommendation on the landscaping concepts. The following were the DRC’s recommendations:

1. Wall material to be gravity stacked wall (City to approve rock type and color) similar to the newly constructed gravity stacked wall used at the new Bob’s Carpet building.
2. For the area outside the rock wall, the DRC recommended concept 1 ensuring colorful entry. DRC is also looking for plantings that provide year round color, ease of maintenance, and are suitable for Zone 7 plantings.
3. For inside the rock wall, DRC is recommending concept 2 providing tree plantings with the addition of large boulders (3 or 4). The trees and boulders were DRC’s recommendation for a signature element. Electricity will be needed in the center of the roundabout to allow Christmas tree lighting of the trees. DRC recommended two tree planting options for Council consideration: Option 1 – A Single Christmas type tree, Option 2 – 3 Aspen trees or Birch type trees (colorful bark). DRC also recommended plantings that provide year round color and ease of maintenance around the trees and...
boulders, but which will not overtake the boulders.

4. Concerning the islands and the area in front of the gas station (north east quadrant), keep with the theme of colorful pants and smaller boulders. Plantings should provide year round color and ease of maintenance, and where sufficient width is available in the islands and does not affect signage, medium size trees should be planted (again colorful). W-Trans shall provide input on these possible locations to ensure proper roundabout operations. Additionally, no plants in Caltrans island (southern portion of the project) or right of way.

The proposed concept shall provide the necessary visual obstruction for the roundabout to function properly. The proposed option would cost approximately $150,000 to $180,000.

The Engineering Division worked with the Planning Division in preparing an environmental document to comply with CEQA and NEPA requirements. The City retained the services of North Fork Associates to conduct specialized studies in biology and cultural resources and prepare an environmental assessment. After completing an Initial Study, the City, with the assistance of North Fork Associates, determined that the project, if properly mitigated, would not result in any significant impacts. The Mitigated Negative Declaration was released for a thirty (30) day public review period from September 17 to October 17, 2007. At the conclusion of the public review period, the City did not receive any public comments that raised any new issues or prompted new mitigation measures. All mitigation measures set forth in the Mitigated Negative Declaration will now be applied to the project.

The following are the findings for the Mitigated Negative Declaration:

1. The City completed an Initial Study in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and concluded that the project may have potentially significant impacts on the environment. Mitigation measures were incorporated into the project to fully mitigate all potentially significant impacts on the environment. The City circulated the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration for public review (from September 17, 2008 to October 17, 2007) and received no comments or substantial evidence that the project will have a significant effect on the environment.

2. The City Council has independently reviewed, analyzed and considered the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration prior to making its decision on this project, and the Mitigated Negative Declaration reflects the independent judgment of the City of Grass Valley.

FISCAL IMPACT: Sufficient funding for the evaluation and design of the East Main/Idaho-Maryland Intersection Improvement Project is available in City Regional Traffic Fees (CRTF). The Engineering Department developed a funding plan consisting of $781,000 in CRTF collected prior to development of the RTMF, and the newly approved AB1600 Development Impact Fee (DIF) for Traffic and Circulation Improvements to fund the estimated total project cost of $1,471,000.

Attachments (5):

Exhibit A – Roundabout Conceptual Aerial Overlay
Exhibit B – Landscaping Option 1
Exhibit C – Landscaping Option 2
Exhibit D – Landscaping Option 3
Mitigated Negative Declaration with public comments

To: Dalene Whitlock, W-Trans
    Tom Last, Planning Director

cc: File #02-03