

# Memorandum



DATE March 5, 2010

TO Members of the Transportation and Environment Committee:  
Linda Koop (Chair), Sheffie Kadane (Vice Chair), Jerry R. Allen, Tennell Atkins,  
Carolyn R. Davis, Angela Hunt, Delia Jasso, Pauline Medrano, Ron Natinsky,  
Vonciel Jones Hill

SUBJECT North Central Expressway Landscaping

Attached is the "North Central Expressway Landscaping" briefing that will be presented to you on March 8, 2010. It provides information on the existing landscaping and amenities and provides options to discuss and further consider as the City and the Texas Department of Transportation plan for future efforts in this area.

Please contact me if you need additional information.



Jill A. Jordan, P.E.  
Assistant City Manager

c: The Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
Mary K. Suhm, City Manager  
Thomas P. Perkins, Jr., City Attorney  
Deborah Watkins, City Secretary  
Craig Kinton, City Auditor  
Judge C. Victor Lander, Administrative Judge  
Ryan S. Evans, First Assistant City Manager  
A.C. Gonzalez, Assistant City Manager  
Forest E. Turner, Assistant City Manager  
Jeanne Chipperfield, Chief Financial Officer  
Edward Scott, Director, Controller's Office  
Helena Stevens-Thompson, Assistant to the City Manager – Council Office  
Rick Galceran, P.E., Director, Public Works and Transportation  
Gilbert Aguilar, Director, Street Services

# North Central Expressway Landscaping

Council Transportation and  
Environment Committee

March 8, 2010

Public Works and Transportation and  
Texas Department of Transportation





# Purpose of Briefing

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- Provide update on TxDOT's plan to modify landscaping on North Central Expressway between Woodall Rodgers and LBJ Freeway
- Identify options that maintain a strong amenities package on North Central and the potential cost impact to the City
- Obtain Committee direction regarding which option to pursue with TxDOT



# Background

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- City Council accepted provisions of the original North Central amenities package in 1986
  - State and City to each pay half of a \$10.1 million amenities package
  - State would “maintain that portion of the work which is its responsibility in accordance with applicable maintenance agreements”
- The amenities package included:
  - Landscaping for medians, window boxes in retaining walls, bridges and service road parkways
  - Pavers on transitions for cross streets
  - Architectural treatment of bridges and retaining walls

# Background

- North Central is the only enhanced landscaping program in the Dallas District without a local maintenance partner
- TxDOT is primarily interested in reducing or eliminating landscaping costs associated with the median, window boxes and bridges
- Decorative architectural features on bridges were removed in 2003-2004
- Median landscaping from Woodall Rodgers to Mockingbird was removed in late 2007



# Background

- Median landscaping from Mockingbird to LBJ Freeway was scheduled for removal in early 2009
- City began discussions with TxDOT in early 2008
- City options previously discussed with Committee:
  - Do Nothing
  - Maintain Current Program
  - Native Grasses Program
  - Hardscape Program





# Do Nothing

## City Option 1

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- City does not partner with TxDOT
- Remaining median and window box landscaping will be removed in subsequent maintenance contracts
- TxDOT will seek private sector partners to maintain bridge landscaping; without partners, bridge landscaping and planter amenities will likely be reduced over time
- Reduced mowing/pruning cycles for areas between main lanes and frontage roads (3 per year by TxDOT)
- TxDOT could install some type of hardscape median treatment in response to community concerns
- City of Dallas cost: None



# Maintain Current Program

## City Option 2

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- City partners with TxDOT - five year financial commitment with option to renew annually
- TxDOT repairs irrigation system and replaces dead plant material with existing plant types in median, planter boxes, and on bridges
- Maintain existing mowing/pruning cycles for parkway area between main lanes and frontage roads (10 to 12 per year by City)
- City of Dallas estimated cost: \$750,000/year

# Maintain Current Program

## City Option 2



Dwarf Burford Holly

Primrose Jasmine



Honeysuckle



Red Yucca



Abelia



Purple Wintercreeper



# Native Grasses Program

## City Option 3

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- City partners with TxDOT - five year financial commitment with option to renew annually
- TxDOT terminates irrigation system and replaces plant material with native grasses in median and on bridges if desired by City
- TxDOT will seek private sector partners to maintain bridge landscaping; without private sector partners, bridge landscaping and planter amenities will likely be reduced over time
- Plant material in window boxes will be removed
- Reduced mowing/pruning cycles for parkway area between main lanes and frontage roads (3 per year by TxDOT)
- City of Dallas estimated cost: \$300,000/year (for median only) 9

# Native Grasses Program

## City Option 3



Maiden Grass



Muhly Grass



Fountain Grass



Love Grass

# Native Grasses Program

City Option 3 - Test Site – November 2008



# Native Grasses Program

City Option 3 - Test Site – September 2009/January 2010





# Hardscape Program

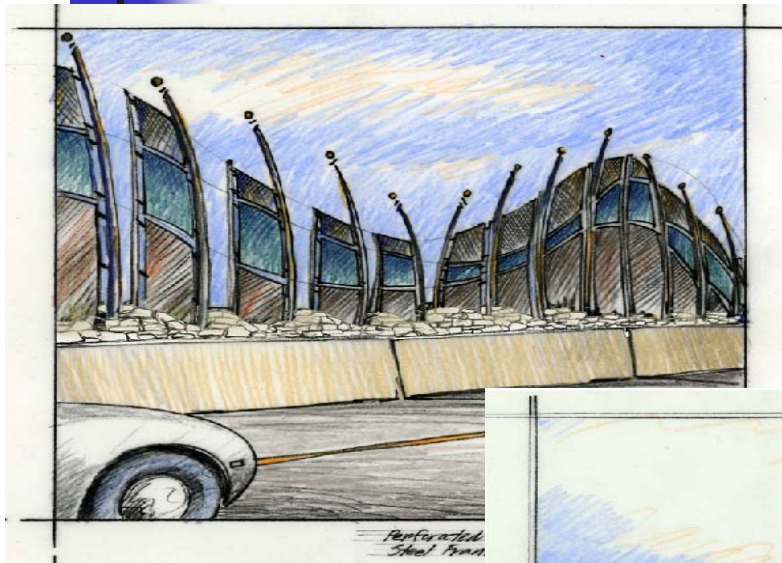
## City Option 4

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- TxDOT replaces landscaping in the median and window boxes with a “hardscape” element such as a fence, rail, screen or sculpture.
- TxDOT will seek private sector partners to maintain bridge landscaping; without partners, bridge landscaping and planter amenities will likely be reduced over time
- Reduced mowing/pruning cycles for parkway area between main lanes and frontage roads (3 per year)
- City of Dallas cost: None

# Hardscape Program

## City Option 4





# Summary of Options

Area To Be Maintained	OPTION			
	1	2	3	4
Median	No	Yes	Yes	Yes**
Window Boxes	No	Yes	No	No
Bridges	No*	Yes	No*	No*
Parkway Between Main Lanes and Frontage Roads	Yes – 3X/yr.	Yes - 10-12X/yr.	Yes – 3X/yr.	Yes – 3X/yr.
Estimated Annual Cost to City	\$0	\$750,000	\$300,000	\$0

\* Assumes no private sector sponsor

\*\* Assumes hardscape with minimal maintenance requirements



# TXDOT Current Plan

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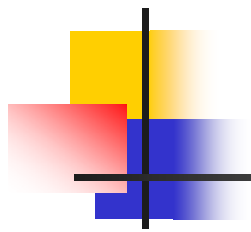
- Landscape contract expires March 2010
- New contract to be let July 2010
  - Woodall Rodgers to IH 635
  - Plant median
  - Plant window boxes if desired by City (irrigation required)
  - Add 18" of polymer enhanced soil
- Start construction September 2010
- End TxDOT maintenance April 2011



# City Action Necessary

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- Determine acceptable landscape or hardscape option
- Provide input to TxDOT
- Authorize appropriate agreement with TxDOT
- Budget cost in FY 2010 - 2011
  - Option 2 - \$315,000 (estimate for partial year)
  - Option 3 - \$125,000 (estimate for partial year)
- Bid and authorize City maintenance contract



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# Questions/Discussion