



Date: December 17, 2024

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Craig Bilezerian, Public Works Director

By: Luis Ochoa, Landscape Manager | LOchoa@TorranceCA.Gov

Subject: Public Works – Approve Discontinued Use of Recycled Water and Relinquishment of Landscape Maintenance Responsibilities for Parkways on Artesia Blvd Between Hawthorne Blvd and Western Ave. Expenditure: None.

## RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation of the Public Works Director that City Council:

- 1) Approve permanently discontinuing the use of recycled water for irrigation of the Artesia Blvd parkways between Hawthorne Blvd and Western Ave due to cross-connection concerns; and
- 2) Relinquish and return the Artesia Blvd parkway maintenance responsibility back to each adjacent property owner between Hawthorne Blvd and Western Ave.

## FUNDING

None required.

## DISCUSSION

In 2003, the City Council approved infrastructure improvements to Artesia Blvd between Hawthorne Blvd and Western Ave, approximately 2.5 miles. Included with the improvements were new landscaping and a City-owned recycled water irrigation system in both the center medians and parkways. New trees and vegetation were planted in the center medians and trees and sod were planted in the parkways. A recycled water irrigation system was installed in the center medians and parkways. The City connected the new recycled water irrigation system to the existing recycled water pipeline in Artesia Blvd, owned/operated by West Basin Municipal Water District (WBMWD). The Public Works Department Streetscape Division has been maintaining the median and parkway landscaping and irrigation since 2004, including mowing the parkway turf. Artesia Blvd is the only area in the City where staff mows the parkway turf in front of private properties and pays the related cost for irrigation using recycled water.

The Artesia Blvd portion of the recycled water irrigation system in the parkways has become problematic for the City. Specifically, because some private property owners or their landscapers have “cross-connected” their private potable water irrigation system with the recycled water irrigation system. This is a significant concern because a cross-connection mixes recycled water with potable drinking water, which is not allowed and is a potential health concern. Consequently,

the County of Los Angeles Public Health has suspended the City's use of the Artesia Blvd recycled water irrigation system multiple times. The recycled water system has been inoperable for over two years due to these concerns. Consequently, in order to meet landscape irrigation needs, Public Works used potable water, as needed, dispensed from its portable water wagon. Furthermore, the County of Los Angeles Public Health has recommended permanently disconnecting the recycled water irrigation system to the parkways on Artesia Blvd. The Artesia Blvd parkways are the only parkways in the City that have a recycled water irrigation system, adjacent to private properties.

Due to the "cross-connection" concerns discussed above, Public Works recommends permanently discontinuing use of the recycled water in the Artesia Blvd parkways. This includes disconnecting and "capping" the recycled water purple pipe to the parkways at the medians and in the parkways on Artesia Blvd, including removal of the portions of purple pipe, as necessary. Use of recycled water to the center medians will be re-activated, subsequent to disconnection of parkway portion. The County of Los Angeles Public Health has no concerns regarding use of recycled water for irrigation of the center medians. There have been no "cross-connection" issues with other recycled water medians in the City because other medians are not easily accessible by the public, nor are the systems immediately adjacent to private irrigation systems using potable water. By reactivating the recycled water line for the center medians, the City would continue water conservation efforts and save 30% of water costs compared to potable water.

Public Works also recommends returning the parkway maintenance responsibility for irrigation, mowing, etc. on Artesia Blvd back to the adjacent property owners, consistent with Torrance Municipal Code Section 75.1.13 and all other parkways in the City. Returning the Artesia Blvd parkway maintenance responsibility back to the property owners would allow staff more time, approximately 72 labor hours per month, to perform landscape maintenance in the public right of way of other landscaped areas of the City, including weed abatement, mowing, trimming, trash debris clean-up and irrigation repairs throughout the City.

The City recently planted a total of 110 new street trees on Artesia Blvd, of which 96 are in the parkways and 14 in center medians, consistent with our Citywide Tree planting program. This increases the total number of trees from 402 to 512 trees throughout Artesia Blvd.

If approved, Public Works will issue a 60-day written notice and a 30-day written notice, each with letters and door hangers, to approximately 192 property owners along Artesia Blvd informing them of the transition. Parkway maintenance adjacent to McMaster Park will also be returned to Community Services, Park Services Division.

Subsequent to the transition, Public Works will continue to maintain the trees and vegetation in the center medians, and the trees in the Artesia Blvd parkways.

## **ATTACHMENT**

### **1. PowerPoint Presentation**



# **ARTESIA BLVD PARKWAY MAINTENANCE RELINQUISHMENT**

December 3, 2024

PUBLIC WORKS | STREETSCAPE DIVISION

# BACKGROUND

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- In 2003, City Council approved the following landscape improvements on Artesia Blvd., from Hawthorne Blvd. to Western Ave. (approximately 2.5 miles)
  - Installation of recycled water irrigation in parkways and center medians
  - Planting of trees and sod in parkways
  - Planting of trees and vegetation in center medians

# BACKGROUND

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## The City Currently Provides :

- Parkway water for irrigation
- Parkway maintenance of irrigation system
- Parkway turf mowing
- Parkway tree maintenance

# ANALYSIS

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- Property owners or their landscapers have “cross-connected” their private potable water irrigation system with the City recycled water irrigation system in the parkways
- Cross connection mixes recycled water with potable drinking water, which is not allowed and is a health concern

# ANALYSIS

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- The County of Los Angeles Public Health has suspended the use of recycled water irrigation multiple times due to cross connection issues. Irrigation has been off for over two years
- County of Los Angeles Public Health has recommended permanently disconnecting recycled water (to the parkways)
- Recycled water will resume in the center medians

# CONTINEOUS CITY MAINTENANCE

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- City recently planted 110 new trees located in vacant parkways and center medians. There are now 512 street trees on Artesia
- The City will continue to maintain the trees in the parkways
- The City will continue to maintain the trees, vegetation, and irrigation in the center medians



# RECOMMENDATION

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- Permanently discontinue recycled water to parkways
- Return parkway maintenance responsibility of irrigating and mowing to the property owners consistent with Torrance Municipal Code 75.1.13, which states that it shall be the duty of property owners to provide for maintenance of grass and landscaping in public parkways abutting their property
- Inform 192 property owners that are adjacent to the grass parkways of the transition. Issue 60 and 30-day written notice of letters and door hangers

# Questions?

