

STAFF REPORT

City of Lancaster

NB 2
09/13/11
MVB

Date: September 13, 2011

To: Mayor Parris and City Council Members

From: Robert C. Neal, Director of Public Works

Subject: **Downtown Roundabout and Parking Management**

Recommendation:

Direct staff to proceed with the Fiscal Year 2011/2012 Capital Improvements Project for the Downtown Roundabout Project (15ST030), to design and construct a roundabout at the intersection of Lancaster Boulevard and 10th Street West and approve the appropriation of \$75,000.00 from the Traffic Impact fees fund balance to Capital Improvement Budget Account No. 232-13AC001-924 for development of a Downtown Parking Strategy Plan.

Fiscal Impact:

With this action, sufficient funds are available in the Capital Improvements Budget Account Nos. 209-15ST030-924, 210-15ST030-924, 232-15ST030-924, and 371-15ST030-924 for the design and construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Lancaster Boulevard and 10th Street West, and Account No. 232-13AC001-924 for the Downtown Parking Strategy Study.

Background:

At the June 28, 2011, City Council meeting, staff was directed to report back to the Council with more information on the proposed Downtown Roundabout and the parking situation in the Downtown area. Since that time, staff has gathered relevant information; met with the BLVD Association to discuss concerns and received additional feedback. Based upon that input this report was produced.

The roundabout proposed at the intersection of 10th Street West and Lancaster Boulevard is integral to the Downtown Lancaster Revitalization Project's overall scheme to create a destination out of the BLVD. It will serve as a fitting gateway to a 15 mph street, where the single lane is narrow and people on foot are everywhere, including the roadway itself. The roundabout will force drivers to slow down, make it easier for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross to the BLVD, and give every visitor a preview of what to expect on the BLVD.

More than its aesthetic quality and operational efficiency, the modern roundabout is most desired for its outstanding safety record. Due to fewer conflicting travel paths than a traditional four-legged intersection, the uniform direction of travel and lower vehicle speeds, roundabouts have been documented to reduce collisions involving fatalities by 90%, reduce injury related collisions by 76%, and reduce overall collisions by 35%.

A parking supply and utilization analysis was conducted in 2006 as part of the preparation of the Downtown Lancaster Specific Plan. This study indicated that the maximum rate of parking space occupancy in the downtown area as a whole was 38%, meaning that a significant surplus of parking spaces existed. Staff conducted some additional parking counts in the six-block “core area” (bounded by Kettering Street, Date Avenue, Milling Street, and Fern Avenue) where the majority of physical change has occurred since 2006 to determine current parking supply of both on and off-street parking, and determined that total parking supply has remained largely unchanged. Total parking demand as based on the specific plan requirement, which accounts for new development and uses that have occupied space in this core area, indicates that an overall surplus of parking still remains. Staff field investigations, conducted on various days and times during the past month, confirm this conclusion.

Staff has also investigated other cities with successful downtown areas and found that complaints related to the amount of parking are not uncommon. However, the most successful downtown areas have implemented effective parking strategies that not only seek to make efficient use of the existing parking resource, but put into place long-term approaches to provide and maintain adequate parking that complements the overall development strategy for the downtown area. Staff believes that there is a need for a parking management study/strategy that will inventory available parking in the downtown area, including location, quantity, and actual usage. The study would also identify where and what parking facilities would be needed to support long-term development and use expectations in the downtown area, including a comparative analysis of alternative scenarios of providing and managing downtown parking. The study would incorporate transportation demand management (TDM) measures among its parking management scenarios, including what parking revenue systems, if any, would be suitable.