CITY OF RIVERSIDE

"People Serving People"

City Council Memorandum

Riverside All-America City 1998

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL **DATE:** November 12, 2003

ITEM NO.: 24

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VICTORIA AVENUE AD HOC COMMITTEE

BACKGROUND:

On October 15, 2002 the City Council approved Tract 30627, a subdivision of 4.8 acres into 10 lots southeasterly of Anna and Victoria Avenues. In conjunction with review of this map the City Council directed an ad hoc committee to study development patterns along Victoria Avenue, listed in the National Register of Historic Places and a City Cultural Heritage Landmark, and make recommendations for how to best preserve the historic and aesthetic integrity of the Avenue, particularly as new development is proposed.

The Victoria Avenue Ad Hoc Committee includes Council members Adkison, Defenbaugh and Schiavone. The Committee has met numerous times with interested citizens and staff of various departments, including Planning, Park and Recreation, Public Works and Public Utilities. The Committee has agreed on a number of design and development standards for new development. To implement these standards the Committee is recommending that the City Council direct staff to initiate a zoning case to establish an overlay zone for Victoria Avenue and adjoining properties. Pending adoption of the overlay zone, it is recommended that the City Council direct that the recommended standards should be required of new development as a matter of City policy.

The Committee is also recommending that the City Council conceptually approve establishing Victoria Avenue as a City park, and direct staff to begin the process to formally accomplish this task. Only the parkways and median areas would be established as a park. The traveled roadway and portions of the parkway and medians at major intersections would remain as a City street.

The Committee weighed the pros and cons of designating the Avenue as a park, and felt on balance that the overriding benefit is that the Avenue would become eligible for Federal and State park monies, which could be used to maintain and improve the parkways and medians and acquire property as needed. One drawback to the park designation could occur on occasion when roadway improvements are needed, particularly at intersections. State law requires no net loss of park land. Intersection improvements, however, often involve reduction in the parkway or median areas. To avoid this potential problem, the Public Works and Parks Departments have planned to carefully look at the park boundaries, particularly in the intersection areas. A listing of the pros and cons considered by the Committee is attached as Exhibit 2.

Attachment 1 - City Council Policy on 2003 Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations for Victoria Avenue

FISCAL IMPACT:

No major fiscal impacts are anticipated by either the Park and Recreation or Public Works Departments. Designating Victoria Avenue as a park will have the beneficial fiscal impact of making the Avenue eligible for Federal and State park monies

ALTERNATIVES:

The primary alternative would be the status quo. Due to the historic significance of Victoria Avenue, staff and the Committee agree that it is important that the recommendations be approved in order to protect the Avenue and provide adequate fiscal resources for its maintenance and improvement over time.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council:

1. Approve the recommended Design and Development Standards for Victoria Avenue outlined in Exhibit 1 and direct the Planning Department to initiate a zoning case to establish an implementing overlay zone on the Avenue and adjoining properties.

2. Pending approval of an overlay zone, direct that the design and development standards in Exhibit 1 be applied to development along Victoria Avenue as a matter of City policy.

3. Direct the Park and Recreation, Public Works, Public Utilities and Planning and Building Departments to begin the process, including necessary hearings, to designate Victoria Avenue, excluding the traveled roadway, as a City park.

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Concurs with:

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Attachments:

Exhibit 1 Victoria Avenue Ad Hoc Committee Recommended Design and Development Standards and Related Measures for Victoria Avenue between Myrtle and La Sierra Avenues

Exhibit 2 Pros and Cons of Designating Victoria Avenue as a Linear Park

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Exhibit 1

VICTORIA AVENUE AD HOC COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS AND RELATED MEASURES FOR VICTORIA AVENUE BETWEEN MYRTLE AND LA SIERRA AVENUES

VICTORIA AVENUE BETWEEN MYRTLE AND LA SIERRA AVENUES

- **Designate Victoria Avenue as an Official City Park.** The entire length of Victoria Avenue between Myrtle (south) and La Sierra Avenues, exclusive of the traveled roadway, shall be officially designated as a linear City Park The designated parkland would include the median, landscaped parkway and asphalt path on the north side. The traveled roadway would remain an official City street, maintained by the Public Works Department. The Public Works and Park and Recreation Departments will work to more precisely define the boundaries and allow for possible future street improvements and traffic controls.

- **Trails along the North Side of Victoria Avenue.** The City Trails Master Plan shall be revised to designate the City trail on Victoria Avenue as being located on the north side of the road way for its entire length, except that westerly of Van Buren Boulevard the trail would transition to the south side. Where appropriate, existing trail connections should be maintained and expanded along the south side of the road way. Trails outside the traveled right-of-way shall be part of the Victoria Avenue Park.

- **Tree Protection**. The City Park and Recreation, Planning and Public Works Departments shall develop a detailed set of tree protection standards, to include construction related protocols for protection of any tree, including roots, trunks and canopies, along Victoria Avenue or any tree within 100 feet from either side of Victoria Avenue. These standards shall be included within the Municipal Code along with procedures and responsible Departments.

- **Two Story Structures**. Whether front-on, side-on or backup, two story structures shall be set back a minimum of 50 feet from the ultimate right of way, and are to be avoided where possible. Single story structures shall be set back at the minimum depth required by the zone. In both cases, single or two stories, additional setback may be required where necessary for protection of existing trees and to provide for landscape screening (e.g., to provide rows of citrus trees).

- **Cultural Heritage Board Staff Approval of Building Design and Landscaping Required**. Any building constructed along Victoria Avenue shall be subject to design approval by the Cultural Heritage Board staff with appeal rights to the Cultural Heritage Board. Design approval shall include the following where visible from the Avenue: building elevations, including colors, landscaping, fencing and walls, tree removals or additions and driveway location and design. In the case of parcel maps, the Planning Commission shall have authority for specifying the location and design of new driveways.

- **"Four-Sided" Architecture Required**. Any new construction along Victoria Avenue shall be required to incorporate high quality architectural design and detail, including "four-sided" architecture subject to Cultural Heritage Board staff approval. Design guidelines particular to Victoria Avenue shall be prepared by the Planning Department subject to approval of the Cultural Heritage Board.

- **Three Rows of Citrus Required for Any New Development**. Any new development shall be required to plant three rows of citrus along Victoria Avenue, either within the right-of-way (or linear park) or within a landscape easement area in favor of the City's Parks Department. The City Park's Department shall develop a design with standard spacing and placement of individual trees and rows of trees, and shall be responsible for long term maintenance of the trees and irrigation. When Victoria Avenue is designated as a Park, Park fees shall be used to plant the trees.

- **Landscaping of Corners and along Side Streets.** In the case of any new development at a corner property, appropriate landscaping shall be required at the corner and along the side street subject to approval of the Cultural Heritage Board staff.

- **Utility Vaults**. Utility facilities, including power, water, cable, gas or other utility, on Victoria Avenue or on an intersecting street within 200 feet of Victoria Avenue shall be either constructed underground or appropriately screened subject to approval of the Planning Department. The affected Department or agency may choose to develop a consistent, appropriate standard design subject to Cultural Heritage Board staff approval.

VICTORIA AVENUE NORTHEAST OF WASHINGTON STREET

- **Reverse Frontage (Backup) Treatment Only Permitted.** New development shall be constructed as backup treatment.

- **Reverse Frontage (Backup) Walls Required.** Backup walls shall be 6 foot high, solid, decorative masonry walls. Backup walls shall not be increased in height by retaining walls. Vines shall be required to create a "green wall" effect and minimize graffiti.

VICTORIA AVENUE SOUTHWEST OF WASHINGTON STREET TO LA SIERRA AVENUE

- **Front-On or Side-On Treatment Only Permitted**. All new subdivisions and construction shall be designed to have front-on treatment to the Avenue where possible. Side-on treatment is permitted where front-on is not possible or practical. No new reverse frontage development is permitted.

- **South Side - New Driveways Directly onto Victoria Avenue Shall Be Discouraged**. Where practical, new driveways serving homes in this area shall be off side streets to Victoria Avenue where possible, even where homes front onto Victoria Avenue. The design and location of all driveways serving homes on Victoria Avenue shall be subject to Cultural Heritage staff approval, and shall provide for adequate drainage, particularly in areas where there is no curb and gutter. Where driveways are directly off Victoria Avenue, they should be of the minimum width practical

and safe up to a maximum width of 18 feet.

- **North Side - New Driveways onto Victoria Avenue Permitted.** New driveways serving homes on the north side of Victoria Avenue may be located directly off Victoria Avenue or from side streets. Driveways should be of the minimum width practical and safe up to a maximum width of 18 feet. The design and location of all driveways serving homes on Victoria Avenue shall be subject to Cultural Heritage staff approval, and shall provide for adequate drainage, particularly in areas where there is no curb and gutter.

- **Driveway Easements Required Across Park Property.** Following designation of the parkways as a City park, an easement shall be required to establish a driveway across the park property.

PROS AND CONS OF DESIGNATING VICTORIA AVENUE AS A LINEAR PARK

The idea of designating Victoria Avenue as a linear park brings many new opportunities to the Avenue that could help preserve the unique setting as a scenic drive, as well as creating new opportunities for expanded improvements on the Avenue.

If the Council elects to pursue the possible designation of Victoria Avenue as a linear park (park land), the following are some of the pros and cons that staff sees that need to be considered:

PROS

- Park Development Fees could be used to acquire land or improve land
- State and Federal grants for Park Bond Measures, trail ways and the urban forest, could be sought after
- Higher standards for development and preservation could be applied
- Park rules could be applied and enforced when appropriate
- Creates an inter-city feel of green way connections
- Increase the City's developed park acres per capita status

CONS

- Would require a greater working relationship with Planning, Public Works, Public Utilities, and other agencies as it relates to work done on the Avenue or any improvements made to the Avenue. (This could actually have a good long-term outcome.)
- Any programs or changes to the Avenue would involve another layer of processing via the Park & Recreation Commission and Legal as it applied to liability issues on park land.

Staff believes the concept of Victoria Avenue being designated a linear park would benefit the City. If this concept is approved by City Council, staff would coordinate the necessary action steps with Legal, Public Works, Public Utilities and Property Services to create this new park land.