



City Council Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: MARCH 3, 2026
FROM: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT WARD: 1
SUBJECT: WHITTIER PLACE – JOINT USE AND REIMBURSEMENT AGREEMENTS

ISSUE:

Consider joint use and reimbursement agreements for Whittier Place between the vacated portion of Chestnut Street and Market Street.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Approve the proposed joint use agreement with the Riverside Community College District and adjoining University Avenue property owner;
2. Approve the proposed reimbursement agreement with the Riverside Community College District to construct an electronic gate system and miscellaneous pedestrian & fencing improvements along Whittier Place;
3. Authorize the City Manager, or designee, to execute the joint use and reimbursement agreements including any minor non-substantial changes; and
4. Direct staff to return to Council to award a bid for construction of all improvements associated with the alleyway vacation, alongside formal adoption of the proposed vacation.

BACKGROUND:

The Whittier Place alleyway between the vacated portion of Chestnut Street and Market Street in the Downtown is situated alongside White Park, the Riverside Community College District (RCCD) facility, and a private commercial property. The alleyway is currently a mix of private property held by the parties, City property associated with White Park, and public right of way. The alleyway has been a continued source of security, loitering, vandalism, and illegal dumping concerns. The approximately 720 foot long alley is at the back end of the various properties it abuts, and efforts to control the various quality of life concerns noted above have been unsuccessful.

The impacted parties, along with the Riverside Downtown Partnership, convened several onsite discussions before arriving at a proposed solution to mitigate their collective concerns.

DISCUSSION:

After careful consideration of the continued impacts along the Whittier Place alleyway, the impacted parties have proposed a solution which would block the alleyway from general vehicle and pedestrian traffic. The alleyway would be closed using a new electronic gate system to be managed by RCCD. The alley would remain accessible to the various maintenance, emergency, utility service, and staff vehicles & pedestrians requiring entrance through a key & telecom system.

Upon completion of the gate improvements, the newly closed Whittier Place would be more easily maintained in a clean and safe manner as detailed in the attached joint use agreement.

The parties initially considered creating an enclosed pedestrian environment for adjacent uses; however this was deemed unfeasible due to the need for regular vehicle access and because it would not allow for a complete solution to the ongoing security concerns. The public will still benefit from occasional access to Whittier Place during certain special events. A new, wider, and decorative pedestrian gate would be installed on the north entrance to White Park to facilitate this access. Special events will help to activate and draw the public to a place which previously felt unwelcoming.

Per the attached reimbursement agreement, RCCD is responsible for funding the initial installation of the necessary gate and pedestrian improvements. Both the City and RCCD would share maintenance costs for the gate system.

Upon execution of the joint use and reimbursement agreements, staff will bid the construction project and will expeditiously return to the City Council to award the construction contract and formally vacate Whittier Place.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact for the construction portion of this project. The Riverside Community College District will reimburse the City for the cost to construct the electronic gate system and associated pedestrian improvements.

The fiscal impact for the maintenance section of this project is as follows: The Public Works Department will participate in ongoing maintenance costs of the electronic gate system. For the first three years of the agreement, the gate maintenance costs will be split 50/50 with RCCD; however, the City's costs are not to exceed \$5,000 per year. Starting in year four of the agreement, the City's obligation will be reduced to 25% of total maintenance costs, retaining the same not to exceed amount of \$5,000 per year. Sufficient funds for these costs are available in the Gas Tax Fund, Miscellaneous Street Construction project account 9507027-440223.

Prepared and
Approved by: Nathan Mustafa, Interim Public Works Director
Certified as to
availability of funds: Julie Nemes, Interim Finance Director
Approved by: Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form: Rebecca McKee-Reimbold, Interim City Attorney

Attachments: Joint Use and Reimbursement Agreements