

Memo



Date: March 19, 2010
File: 6130-01
To: City Manager
From: Ian Wilson, Park Services Manager
Subject: Highway 97 Median Maintenance

Recommendation:

THAT Council receive for information the March 19, 2010 update from the Park Services Manager regarding landscaped Highway 97 medians in Kelowna;

AND THAT Council direct staff to maintain the Highway 97 medians within the existing budget, by utilizing herbicide products.

Background:

The August 9, 2009 report by the Manager of Park Services outlined some recent challenges with maintaining landscaped medians on Highway 97. These medians have been developed and maintained by the City for a number of years, in an effort to beautify the Highway 97 corridor through Kelowna.

In 2009, WorkSafe BC notified the City that the maintenance practices that were being used by the City contractor were not adequate for worker protection. In order to meet the requirements of WorkSafe, as well as the requirements of the Ministry of Transportation, staff determined that the landscaped medians would have to be maintained at night with lane closures, flaggers, lighting and specialized equipment, at a significantly higher cost.

Design and Construction Services (DCS) are currently working on a new highway median design standard that will provide attractive landscaping and address safety concerns while allowing more sustainable maintenance practices. If approved, this standard will be used to construct several new medians this year, to the new standard. DCS also has a \$100,000 budget to begin renovating some older medians to meet the new standard, but this process will likely take several years. Staff anticipate that the new design standard should help to reduce the amount of weeding and maintenance required. In the meantime, a solution is still required to properly maintain the existing medians and ensure that they do not deteriorate.

An additional maintenance budget was submitted for 2010 but was ranked a Priority 2, as staff were hopeful that a Job Creation Partnership might be negotiated with the Ministry of Social Housing and Development to conduct the work, as was done in 2009. Unfortunately the Ministry has indicated that they are unlikely to fund this request for 2010.

Therefore staff solicited several quotes from contractors for the purposes of determining an appropriate budget. While Park Services is very reluctant to utilize herbicides on public property at this scale, weed control is one of the most time consuming and costly aspects of the maintenance program. Herbicides were also explored as a temporary solution, since public exposure to these products would be very low if used in the centre of the highway. Following are budget estimates for two options:

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Option #1: Maintain the highway medians to the existing maintenance standard, including weekly litter cleanup and mechanical weed control, and shrub pruning.

- Estimated budget: \$240,000
- Additional operating budget required for 2010: \$136,000, increasing to approximately \$186,000 in 2011

Option #2: This is the preferred option. Maintain the highway medians using herbicides for weed control. This would include two applications of pre-emergent herbicides (taking care to avoid any catch basins on the highway) and spot treatments with post-emergent herbicides as needed. Shrubs would be pruned once in the spring and litter picked up once per week.

- Estimated Cost: \$98,000 (includes approx. \$15,000 for weed control)
- No additional operating budget required for 2010 but \$50,000 (estimated) would be required for 2011.

External Agency/Public Comments:

Staff consulted with the Ministry of Environment on the proposed herbicide application to ensure that herbicide applications would be permitted if applied as per the label directions.

Communications Considerations:

Staff will work with the Community and Media Relations department to provide information to the public.

Legal/Statutory Authority:

The use of herbicide products by a certified pesticide applicator is permitted under the City's Cosmetic Pesticide Bylaw. However, staff are seeking Council approval given that this would be a significant and high profile application of these products, that use of an herbicide at this location would be for cosmetic purposes, and pre-emergent products are not typically part of an Integrated Pest Management program.

Alternate Recommendation:

THAT Council receive for information the March 10, 2010 update from the Park Services Manager regarding landscaped Highway 97 medians in Kelowna;

AND THAT Council direct staff to maintain the Highway 97 medians to the existing standard, without the use of herbicide products;

AND THAT Council direct staff to submit an additional operating budget request at the 2010 Final Budget for \$136,000.

Internal Circulation:

Director Community and Media Relations
General Manager Community Sustainability
General Manager Community Services
Purchasing Manager
Director Financial Services

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

The current highway 97 median budget is \$54,000 but staff were able to negotiate a one time \$50,000 reduction on another maintenance contract, therefore adequate budget is available unless the alternative recommendation is approved by City Council.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Legal/statutory Procedural Requirements:

Personnel Implications:

Existing Policy:

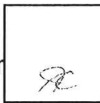
Technical Requirements:

Submitted by:



I. Wilson, Park Services Manager

Approved for inclusion



Joe Creron, Director, Civic Operations

CC:

A. Gibbs, Park and Public Space Projects Manager

B. Berry, Director Design and Construction Services

