

**BENICIA CITY COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA**

**Council Chambers  
August 17, 2010  
6:00 PM**

*Times set forth for the agenda items are estimates.  
Items may be heard before or after the times designated.*

**I. CALL TO ORDER (6:00 PM):**

**II. CONVENE OPEN SESSION:**

**A. ROLL CALL**

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**C. REFERENCE TO THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF THE PUBLIC:**

A plaque stating the fundamental rights of each member of the public is posted at the entrance to this meeting room per section 4.04.030 of the City of Benicia's Open Government Ordinance.

**III. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:**

This portion of the meeting is reserved for persons wishing to address the Council on any matter not on the agenda that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the City Council. State law prohibits the City Council from responding to or acting upon matters not listed on the agenda. Each speaker has a maximum of five minutes for public comment. If others have already expressed your position, you may simply indicate that you agree with a previous speaker. If appropriate, a spokesperson may present the views of your entire group. Speakers may not make personal attacks on council members, staff or members of the public, or make comments which are slanderous or which may invade an individual's personal privacy.

**A. WRITTEN COMMENT**

**B. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**IV. ADOPTION OF AGENDA:**

**V. CLOSED SESSION (6:05 PM):**

**A. CONFERENCE WITH REAL PROPERTY NEGOTIATOR (Government Code Section §54956.8)**

City owned property (City of Benicia Park Road Right of Way between Stone Road and East Second Street, i.e., the location of the "Nationwide" sign)

Negotiating parties: City Manager and Economic Development Manager -  
Instruction to negotiator on price and terms of payment.

**B. PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION  
(Subdivision (b) of Government Code Section 54957)  
Title: City Manager**

**C. APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM CITY MANAGER  
(Subdivision (b) of Government Code Section 54957)**

**VI. PRESENTATION (6:30 PM):**

**A. CALTRANS BENICIA-MARTINEZ BRIDGE PROJECT LANDSCAPING  
PRESENTATION. (Public Works and Community Development Director)**

Caltrans has begun work on landscaping in the I-680 and I-780 corridors as part of the Benicia-Martinez Bridge project. City staff has facilitated meetings and communication to inform Caltrans of concerns and requests from citizens, including local California Native Plant Society members. Due mostly to funding constraints but also to citizen comment, the project has changed significantly since Caltrans presented it to the City Council on February 3, 2009.

**Recommendation: Direct staff to continue to work with Caltrans to add appropriate bay-friendly landscaping to the I-680 and I-780 corridors as funding becomes available.**

**VII. ADJOURNMENT (7:00 PM):**

**Public Participation**

The Benicia City Council welcomes public participation.

Pursuant to the Brown Act, each public agency must provide the public with an opportunity to speak on any matter within the subject matter jurisdiction of the agency and which is not on the agency's agenda for that meeting. The City Council allows speakers to speak on non-agendized matters under public comment, and on agendized items at the time the agenda item is addressed at the meeting. Comments are limited to no more than five minutes per speaker. By law, no action may be taken on any item raised during the public comment period although informational answers to questions may be given and matters may be referred to staff for placement on a future agenda of the City Council.

Should you have material you wish to enter into the record, please submit it to the City Manager.

**Disabled Access**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact Anne Cardwell, the ADA Coordinator, at (707) 746-4211. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.

**Meeting Procedures**

All items listed on this agenda are for Council discussion and/or action. In accordance with the Brown Act, each item is listed and includes, where appropriate, further description of the item and/or a recommended action. The posting of a recommended action does not limit, or necessarily indicate, what action may be taken by the City Council.

Pursuant to Government Code Section 65009, if you challenge a decision of the City Council in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City Council at, or prior to, the public hearing. You may also be limited by the ninety (90) day statute of limitations in which to challenge in court certain administrative decisions and orders (Code of Civil Procedure 1094.6) to file and serve a petition for administrative writ of mandate challenging any final City decisions regarding planning or zoning.

The decision of the City Council is final as of the date of its decision unless judicial review is initiated pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedures Section 1094.5. Any such petition for judicial review is subject to the provisions of California Code of Civil Procedure Section 1094.6.

## Public Records

The agenda packet for this meeting is available at the City Manager's Office and the Benicia Public Library during regular working hours. To the extent feasible, the packet is also available on the City's web page at [www.ci.benicia.ca.us](http://www.ci.benicia.ca.us) under the heading "Agendas and Minutes." Public records related to an open session agenda item that are distributed after the agenda packet is prepared are available before the meeting at the City Manager's Office located at 250 East L Street, Benicia, or at the meeting held in the Council Chambers. If you wish to submit written information on an agenda item, please submit to the City Clerk as soon as possible so that it may be distributed to the City Council. A complete proceeding of each meeting is also recorded and available through the City Clerks Office.

**AGENDA ITEM  
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING: AUGUST 17, 2010  
PRESENTATION**

**DATE** : July 20, 2010

**TO** : City Manager

**FROM** : Public Works and Community Development Director

**SUBJECT** : **CALTRANS BENICIA-MARTINEZ BRIDGE PROJECT LANDSCAPING PRESENTATION**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Direct staff to continue to work with Caltrans to add appropriate bay-friendly landscaping to the I-680 and I-780 corridors as funding becomes available.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Caltrans has begun work on landscaping in the I-680 and I-780 corridors as part of the Benicia-Martinez Bridge project. City staff has facilitated meetings and communication to inform Caltrans of concerns and requests from citizens, including local California Native Plant Society members. Due mostly to funding constraints but also to citizen comment, the project has changed significantly since Caltrans presented it to the City Council on February 3, 2009.

**GENERAL PLAN:**

The project supports the following General Plan goal and policy:

- Goal 3.9: Protect and enhance scenic roads and highways.
  - Policy 3.9.2: Work with the State to complete and maintain landscaping of I- 680 and I-780.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN:**

The project supports the following Strategic Plan issue and strategy:

- Issue 4: Preserving and Enhancing Infrastructure
  - Strategy 4.4: Provide adequate funding for ongoing infrastructure needs.

## **BUDGET INFORMATION:**

Continued City involvement in the landscaping project has no budgetary impact other than staff resources.

## **BACKGROUND:**

Public Works & Community Development Director Charlie Knox arranged and attended a meeting May 11, 2010 at City Hall with Steve Goetz, Allison Fleck and Gene Doherty of the Native Plant Society, Jeanne Gorham and Mo Pazooki of Caltrans, and Parks and Building Superintendent Rick Knight.

At the meeting Landscape Architect Jeanne Gorham outlined project changes, and Mo Pazooki, who is the Benicia-Martinez Bridge Project Manager, agreed to respond to any additional citizen requests.

Steve Goetz told the Planning Commission at its May 13, 2010 meeting that he had additional comments and submitted them in a May 19, 2010 letter to the Commission Chair (attached), which was presented to the Commission at, and in the packet for, its June 8, 2010 meeting. The Commission did not provide any further direction to staff regarding freeway landscaping or other gateway policies, which the Commission had finalized for recommendation to Council at its April 2010 meeting (attached).

In July 2010, Mo Pazooki responded on behalf of Caltrans to the bulleted points on page three of Steve Goetz's May 19, 2010 letter as follows:

- *Request additional landscaping on I-780 east of E. Fifth Street and the I-780 median between Hospital Road and Park Road.*

The area on Route 780 east of Fifth Street was minimally impacted by the roadway improvement contract; much of the existing vegetation is still intact. Much of the planting east of East 5th Street has reached its natural life span and is in need of restoration. This area is included in the approved Project Study Report (PSR) for Highway Planting

Restoration. Capital funding for Highway Planting Restoration projects is not currently a priority due to the current economic downturn. This project is a high priority if funding becomes available.

- *Request Caltrans to make the planting of I-780 a priority.*

There have been two PSRs developed for Highway Planting Restoration on Route 780 to accomplish this work. As stated above, funding for this program has not been available in recent years. With an approved PSR, Caltrans is in a position for quick action if funding becomes available.

- *Consider opportunities to implement the City's Gateway Policies by sponsoring City projects on Caltrans Right of Way.*

Caltrans will work with the City as needed for the City to implement a gateway plan. Caltrans has a Gateway Monument Policy, Highway Art program, Adopt a Highway and other ways for the City to enhance the freeway within your community. Caltrans staff would be happy to meet with City staff for further information about working within the Caltrans right of way.

City staff remains available to facilitate achievement of citizen requests for the freeway landscaping as funding may allow.

Attachments:

- City Council Minutes of February 3, 2009
- May 19, 2010 Letter from Steve Goetz
- Planning Commission Gateway Policy Recommendations



MINUTES OF THE  
REGULAR MEETING – CITY COUNCIL  
FEBRUARY 3, 2009

The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Benicia was called to order by Mayor Elizabeth Patterson at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 3, 2009, in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 250 East L Street, complete proceedings of which are recorded on tape.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Council Members Campbell, Hughes, Ioakimedes, Schwartzman, and Mayor Patterson

Absent: None

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Chief Vucurevich led the pledge to the flag.

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS:

A plaque stating the Fundamental Rights of each member of the public is posted at the entrance to the Council Chambers per Section 4.04.030 of City of Benicia Ordinance No. 05-6 (Open Government Ordinance).

ANNOUNCEMENTS/APPOINTMENTS/PRESENTATIONS/PROCLAMATIONS:

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Openings on Boards and Commissions:

- Sky Valley Open Space Committee:  
One unexpired term to September 30, 2010  
One full term to January 31, 2013
- Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Commission:  
One unexpired term to March 31, 2010

Mayor's Office Hours:

Mayor Patterson will maintain an open office every Monday (except holidays) in the Mayor's Office of City Hall from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. No appointment is necessary. Other meeting times may be scheduled through the City Hall office at 746-4200.

APPOINTMENTS:

RESOLUTION 09-06 - A RESOLUTION CONFIRMING THE MAYOR'S REAPPOINTMENT OF FRED DELTORCHIO TO THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION TO A FULL TERM ENDING JANUARY 31, 2013

The above Resolution was adopted, on roll call by the following vote:

Ayes: Council Members Campbell, Hughes, Ioakimedes, Schwartzman, and Mayor Patterson

Noes: None

PRESENTATIONS:

Benicia/Martinez Bridge Landscaping Caltrans Presentation:

Ms. Jeanne Gorham discussed the project Caltrans is working on to provide landscaping at the I-680/I-780 interchange. It is replacement planting associated with the new Benicia/Martinez Bridge. The project is \$3.5 million, including areas on the Martinez side of the bridge as well. The bulk of the landscaping is on the Benicia side of the bridge. She reviewed the plan that showed the planting areas and the plant pallet (copies of handouts on file).

Mayor Patterson and Ms. Gorham discussed the process that would be followed to include the public. It is handled different in each city. She spoke with City Staff and left that up to them. Caltrans would like to have final plans by the end of April. Ms. Gorham stated that they could work directly with a committee and Staff. If there is interest in forming a group of interested community members, they could work with the group.

Mayor Patterson requested Staff come up with a few suggestions and options for a tree committee or small committee. If there is interest by Council Members, they could indicate that to Mr. Erickson.

PROCLAMATIONS:

- Commendations for Police Corporal Mark Menesini and Paramedic/Firefighter James Ensley
- Recognition of National Black History Month

ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

Jim Erickson discussed the issue of enforcement of the A-frame sign rules in the City. The City has taken the position that the A-frame signs would be abated on a 'by complaint' basis. Benicia Main Street has requested that the City revisit the sign rules. Mr. Erickson suggested that the Council revisit the issue. The Chamber of Commerce would be asked for its input as well. In the meantime, the sign enforcement would be done when it posed a safety hazard, until Council revisits the issue.

Mayor Patterson asked if the issue was subject to HPRC review and if it was guided by the master plan that was adopted. Staff's indication was that it would be subject to HPRC review, and it was not guided by the master plan that was adopted.

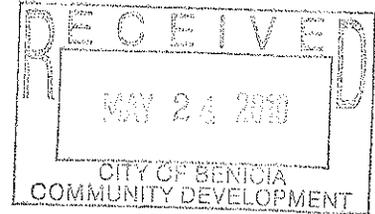
Vice Mayor Campbell asked if the EDB would be involved. Mr. Erickson stated that the EDB could weigh in as well. Vice Mayor Campbell suggested that the discussion should be narrowed to only include the A-frame signs.

Council Member Schwartzman suggested breaking up the sign ordinance to be discussed one issue at a time. He felt that the EDB should be involved.

Council Member Ioakimedes discussed the need to discuss the entire ordinance, not just the A-frame signs.

Mr. Erickson suggested agenda item IX-C be moved ahead of the Benicia Business Park item.

347 Goldenslopes Court  
Benicia, CA 94510  
707-745-4675



Dan Healy, Chairman  
Planning Commission  
City of Benicia  
250 East L Street  
Benicia, CA 94510

May 19, 2010

Dear Chairman Healy;

This letter follows up on the comments I made at the May 13<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting. I commented on the Caltrans landscaping project at the I-680/I-780 Interchange. This area was included in the Commission's recent discussion of Gateways.

For background on this landscaping project, please be aware of the following sequence of events:

- On March 11, 2009, the Parks, Recreation & Cemetery Commission received a presentation from Caltrans on the draft landscaping project. Following public comment and according to the minutes, the Commission indicated that "a rough draft will be sent with more detailed plans for the Commission when it is completed." (Note that this item has not reappeared on the Commission's agenda)
- On March 26, 2009, I sent a letter to the Parks, Recreation & Cemetery Commission that followed up on comments that were made at the Commission meeting (see enclosure).
- On August 17, 2009, Caltrans approved the final landscaping plan.
- On February 11, 2010, the Planning Commission initiated discussion on Gateways where staff indicated that Caltrans was not proceeding with any landscaping at the I-680/I-780 interchange because Caltrans had no funding for this project. It was subsequently discovered that Caltrans had initiated construction of a landscaping project for the interchange. Sometime after the Commission meeting, staff agreed to schedule a meeting between Caltrans and residents who commented on the draft plan.
- On May 11, 2010, residents met with Caltrans staff to review the final landscaping plan.

The purpose of this letter is to document for the Commission the rationale provided by Caltrans for the final landscaping plan as it was explained to residents at the May 11<sup>th</sup>, and to flag any outstanding issues that were raised on the draft plan last March.

- **Overall Landscape Design.** Caltrans staff explained that the final plan contains over 1300 trees, dominated by oaks and incense cedar, which will be planted on about 60 acres in the interchange area. These trees are well suited for local conditions and, while slow growing, will be very large in size at maturity. Residents were pleased with this concept.
- **Landscaped Area Has Been Reduced.** The final plan altered the draft plan by reducing the area proposed for landscaping. The draft plan showed new planting extending closer to E. Fifth on I-780 and closer to Bayshore Road on I-680. Caltrans had two reasons for reducing the landscaped area. First, I-780 west of the Hospital Road undercrossing was not disturbed by the bridge project and therefore is not eligible for new landscaping. Second, the freeway

near Bayshore Road is ineligible for landscaping because the adjacent land uses do not fall within the categories included in Caltrans landscaping policies.

I offer two observations on how Caltrans finalized the project limits. First, the Caltrans claim that I-780 was not disturbed west of Hospital Road undercrossing does not appear supported by observation. After the meeting, I drove I-780 and noticed that the I-780 freeway was widened from the E. Fifth Street eastbound on-ramp to the I-680 northbound connector. Second, the Caltrans policy not to landscape freeways that run through areas like the Benicia Industrial Park would appear to conflict with the City's desire to enhance the Northern Gateway on I-680.

- **Consistency with the Arsenal Historic Conservation Plan Policies.** Caltrans staff visited the Camel Barn area and noted that the freeway altered the rolling hills with an engineered slope and views of freeway guardrails and bridges. I am not aware of any City evaluation of the proposed landscaping with the Arsenal Historic Conservation Plan, but in Caltrans' opinion, the trees planted on the adjacent Caltrans right-of-way would eventually hide the view of the freeway and be a superior viewshed for National Register Historic District A.
- **Absence of ground cover or mulch for most of the interchange area.** Residents expressed concern that most of the 60 acres within the project limits showed no planting other than trees in the final plan. Without plant cover, the area is likely to erode, become weed infested and prone to fire. Caltrans staff explained that groundcover would be expensive to maintain and proposes instead to mow the existing grasses twice a year as the landscape treatment. Caltrans claims that this maintenance strategy will effectively control erosion, fire and weeds.
- **No landscaping in the I-780 median.** Residents were concerned that no landscaping is proposed for the long and wide median on I-780 between Hospital Road and Park Road. Caltrans staff said this area will be mowed twice a year for weed and fire control. Caltrans policy is to not landscape medians because these areas are too dangerous for maintenance workers. Maintenance workers must remain in a vehicle when working in freeway medians. My only observation here is that I recently drove along the Warren Freeway in Oakland and it has a recently reconstructed median with new landscaping.

My impression from the meeting is that Caltrans policies and procedures are established to minimize their responsibilities for landscaping freeways. This final landscaping plan is a reflection of Caltrans interpretation of these policies for the project area.

Based on available information, I would argue that Caltrans application of its policies should be revised in two areas. First, removal of the new landscaping shown in the draft plan on I-780 west of Hospital Road was inappropriate given that construction work extended all the way to the eastbound on-ramp at E. Fifth Street. Lack of new landscaping west of Hospital Road would mostly affect residents facing the freeway on East N Street. Second, based on the Warren Freeway example, the I-780 median between Hospital Road and Park Road may be able to accommodate some planting while not being a danger to Caltrans maintenance workers.

I understand that the City's attorney advised the Commission that the Caltrans' plan is not subject to the City's approval. But I would also advise the Commission that Caltrans is a public agency and is not immune from public pressure. Any public pressure however, based on my experience with this project, would have no effect unless it emanated from an official City body and was supported by City staff.

The need for any next steps entirely depends on the interest of the Commission on Gateways and Caltrans landscaping, and whether the final Caltrans landscape plan meets the Commission's expectations. Potential next steps to consider include:

- **Request additional landscaping on I-780 east of E. Fifth Street as part of the current landscaping project.** The south side of I-780 between the E. Fifth Street onramp and Hospital Road was impacted by the bridge project but is not included in the final landscape plan. This area is most visible from the residential areas along East N Street. Another area that is highly visible but not included in the landscape plan is the I-780 median between Hospital Road and Park Road. Caltrans should be asked to re-examine their ability to provide some landscaping in these two areas.
- **Request Caltrans make replanting the rest of I-780 a priority.** The landscaping project at the I-680/I-780 Interchange presents an opportunity for the City to express its interest in replanting the rest of I-780. You may recall that several years ago Caltrans removed many of the trees along this freeway because they were diseased. At that time Caltrans indicated this landscaping would be replaced as a separate project, subject to the availability of funding. Be aware that the new landscaping at the I-680/I-780 Interchange will take many years to mature. The impact of this landscaping on the community could be greater if it were extended along the length of I-780 in Benicia. The sooner this planting occurs, the sooner residents can benefit from the enhancement. The Commission or the City Council should advise Caltrans of their interest in Caltrans proceeding with rehabilitation of the landscaping along I-780 immediately following completion of the landscaping project at the I-680/I-780 Interchange.
- **Consider opportunities to implement the City's Gateway policies by sponsoring City projects on Caltrans right-of-way.** Apparently, Caltrans policies limit their obligation to install any significant landscaping on I-680. The Planning Commission should investigate opportunities to leverage other resources (e.g. fees or grants) that could be used to construct a Northern Gateway on I-680.

If these issues are of interest to the Commission, you may wish to advise the City Council accordingly.

Sincerely,

  
Steven L. Goetz

Enclosure

Cc: Mayor Patterson, City of Benicia  
Charlie Knox, City of Benicia

Jeanne Gorham, Caltrans  
Mo Pazooki, Caltrans



## Principles for Gateway Priorities, Components, and Process

As Recommended by the City of Benicia's Planning Commission  
April 8, 2010

### Gateway Priorities

The City of Benicia's 1999 General Plan identifies five (5) gateways. Of these, priority should be placed on the Southern Gateway. The General Plan also provides specific policy language pertaining to Pine Lake, which also should be amongst the top priorities for Gateway treatment.

<b>1999 General Plan - Gateways, Figure 1-3</b>	<b>Planning Commission Priorities</b>
Northern Gateway at I-680 and Lake Herman Road	
Lake Herman Gateway along Lake Herman Road just east of Lake Herman	
Southern Gateway at the intersection of I-680 and I-780	✓
Western Gateway at I-780 and Rose Drive/Columbus Parkway	
Marina and the Port as approached from the Carquinez Strait	
<b>1999 General Plan – Pine Lake, Policy 2.11.3, Program 2.11.A</b>	✓

The City should give attention to additional gateways not necessarily identified in the 1999 General Plan. These could include:

<b>Additional (Internal) Gateways</b>	<b>Planning Commission Priorities</b>
Local roads/neighborhoods Along bike/pedestrian paths Inside/alongside parks Focal points/landmarks A designated "city tree"	✓ East 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street exit off I-780 eastbound (replace existing)  ✓ East 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street exit off of I-780 westbound exit – island treatment

Additional guidance to help discern priorities for gateways include the following:

- A. Generally, priority should be given to gateways that are most used and traveled by.
- B. If limited funds are available, attention should be given to the most visible of all gateways, which should be developed to maximize its presence.

- C. The City should seek opportunities where new development can provide or help provide gateways, such as the Seeno development that could assist in establishing the Northern Gateway at I-680 and Lake Herman Road.
- D. There are gateways listed in the General Plan. There are also gateways not listed in the General Plan that have been identified through this process. Should funding become available for gateways that are not listed in the General Plan, it should be considered appropriate to pursue development of such gateways.

#### Gateway Components

1. Consider the art community's ability to infuse artistic elements into gateways, or as a feature in a gateway.
2. Each gateway should have its own unique features, depending upon location and context.
3. Every gateway should be different, however a unifying theme amongst all gateways such as an art piece or common landscape/hardscape features should be incorporated.
4. Gateways should include three basic elements: landscaping, art, and signage.
5. The scale of a gateway needs to be contextual. For example, a gateway located off a highway needs to be large enough to give an impression; in contrast, an interior gateway could be more modest in size.
6. Consider what kind of statement the City of Benicia should make, and to whom, such as visitors, local residents and businesses, and historic interests.

#### Gateway Process

1. Develop a process/work program to begin implementation, when feasible.
2. Seek funding opportunities whenever possible, including leveraging resources that may already be set aside in certain locations, or for certain projects.
3. Consider design competitions, and/or charrettes.
4. Invite the public and the art community, such as Arts Benicia, to participate and play a role in shaping gateways.
5. Include boards and commissions, such as: Art and Culture Commission, the Historic Preservation and Review Commission, Parks Recreation and Cemetery Commission, and Economic Development Board.
6. Include participation by the schools.
7. The public should have an opportunity to comment on Pine Lake applications/plans.