



**Date:** October 4, 2011

**To:** Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager  
**Through:** Theodore L. Voorhees, Deputy City Manager  
**From:** Mark D. Ahrendsen, Transportation Director  
Joel V. Reitzer, Jr., General Services Director

**Subject:** Agenda Item – NC 55 and US 15-501 Landscape Agreements

### **Executive Summary**

The City has requested that the N. C. Department of Transportation (NCDOT) allocate \$192,849 in available landscape funds to implement enhanced landscaping for the completed NC 55 and US 15-501 widening projects. In accordance with NCDOT's Landscape Planting Policy, the improvements may be implemented only if the local jurisdiction agrees to perform the necessary on-going landscape maintenance.

### **Recommendation**

The City Department of Transportation and General Services Department recommend that the City Council authorize the City Manager to execute the R-2906 C (NC 55) and the U-4009, U-4012 & B-3450 (US 15-501) Landscape Agreements with the N. C. Department of Transportation.

### **Background**

NCDOT allocates a portion of each new construction project budget towards enhanced landscape improvements. The allocated amounts are set as a percentage of either estimated or final construction costs in accordance with NCDOT's Landscape Planting Policy. For the NC 55 widening project (R-2906C), between Sedwick Road and Cornwallis Road, the available landscape budget is \$64,836. The US 15-501 widening project (U-4012), the US 15-501 Service Road relocation project (U-4009), and the Garrett Road bridge replacement project (B-3450) have a combined available landscape project budget of \$128,013. The available landscape budget allocations and landscape implementation are subject to the request of and on-going maintenance by the City.

Under an existing separate agreement, NCDOT and the City have agreed to provide and maintain enhanced landscaping at five key interchanges along the I-40 corridor. These interchanges are: I-40/NC 55; I-40/Fayetteville Road; I-40/NC 751; I-40/NC 54, and I-40/US 15-501. These landscaping improvements are funded with up to \$447,903 in landscape funds allocated from the completed I-40 (I-3306B) widening project. Upon developing the project landscape plans, it was determined that the available funds were insufficient to provide the expected level of landscaping. Landscape budget allocations were then

requested for the NC 55 and US 15-501 widening projects to supplement the funds available for the I-40 corridor interchange landscaping project.

### **Issues and Analysis**

The NC 55 and US 15-501 Landscaping Agreements will provide enhanced landscaping at the I-40/NC 55 and the I-40/US15-501 interchanges. This will supplement I-40 landscaping provided under the separate I-40 Landscape Agreement. Under the terms of the proposed agreements, NCDOT will develop the landscape plans and specifications in accordance with the State's standard landscaping policies and procedures for highways. The plants will include deciduous shade and flowering trees and evergreen coniferous and broadleaf trees. The final plans must be approved by the State and the City before planting. NCDOT will prepare the landscaping sites and furnish the plantings in accordance with the project plans. All plantings will be located within the public right-of-way.

During the one-year establishment period, NCDOT will be responsible for the landscape maintenance. At the end of this one-year period, the City of Durham's General Services Department will assume all maintenance responsibility, including watering, mulching, pruning, fertilizing, weeding, pest control, mowing, and replacing plant materials. NCDOT anticipated completing the landscape improvements in the fall of 2011. The City's maintenance responsibilities would begin as early as the end of 2012.

### **Alternatives**

- City Council authorizes the City Manager to execute NC 55 and US 15-501 Landscape Agreements with NCDOT, providing \$192,849 toward enhanced landscaping at the I-40/US 15-501 and I-40/NC 55 interchanges and corridors; or
- City Council does not authorize the City Manager to execute the NC 55 and US 15-501 Landscape Agreements and forgoes \$192,849 in enhanced landscaping at the I-40/US 15-501 and I-40/NC 55 interchanges and corridors. Landscaping will be completed to the degree feasible under the existing NCDOT I-40 Landscape Agreement.

### **Financial Impact**

Provided that current staffing levels are maintained in the Landscape Services and Urban Forestry Divisions, the City should have the capacity to maintain the proposed plantings with minimal impact to current workload and expectations. The staff of General Services worked collaboratively with NCDOT engineers to choose plant material and bed designs that are suited to existing maintenance schedules and equipment. There is no cost to the City for design, installation, or landscape materials or maintenance for the first year. Future year maintenance costs will be covered by the General Services Department's annual operating budget.

### **SDBE Summary**

NCDOT municipal agreements require that their contracting procedures be followed for these projects. The Department of Equal Opportunity/Equity Assurance did not review this item for compliance with the Ordinance to Promote Equal Business Opportunities in City Contracting.

### **Attachments**

NCDOT R-2906 C (NC 55) Landscape Agreement

NCDOT U-4009, U-4012 & B-3450 (US 15-501) Landscape Agreement