

STAFF REPORT

City Council Business Item

DATE: December 15, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Brian Issa, Public Works Director

THROUGH: Amy Nilsen, City Manager

SUBJECT: Discussion of Design Alternatives and Project Aesthetics for Roundabouts and Retaining Walls

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Receive staff presentation and select a preferred level of aesthetic treatment for future interchange projects.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

With the Council choosing to proceed with designs for roundabouts at three sites in the City (5 roundabouts in total), some discussion of preferred surface treatments and overall aesthetics is warranted. The Kenmar Interchange project is farthest along and as the City proceeds toward design completion, discussions with CalTrans require some level of clarity is required regarding what the City expects for landscaping, signage and other aesthetic treatments. While not as imminent, the 12th Street Interchange and the Kenmar/Ross Hill Road projects will bring up similar questions. Any clarity the Council can provide for the Kenmar project will also help inform design decisions at these other sites. Because the Kenmar interchange project is within CalTrans right-of-way, they need to have surface treatments spelled out with sufficient clarity to allow their approval process to be completed, especially if any art installations will be included. Our goal with this presentation is to settle on a general level of design and any thematic elements the City might want to carry throughout these projects to ensure some uniformity of design (if desired).

Retaining Wall Aesthetics

The Kenmar Interchange in particular has more than 200ft of vertical concrete retaining wall ranging in height up to 13ft, with much of the wall directly adjacent to bike/ped facilities and visible to motorists. Retaining wall treatments could include various combinations of the following:

- Bare, unadorned concrete
- Concrete staining
- Basic textures (form liners)
- Custom form liners of varying complexity and customization (thematic elements)
- Art (murals, mosaics etc)

Roundabout Aesthetics

The City has roundabouts planned at the 12th Street and Kenmar Road interchanges (both sides of the freeway), as well as at the Kenmar/Ross Hill intersection. These roundabouts will serve as gateways into the City and will be highly visible to visitors and residents. The design of the roundabouts themselves includes decisions about various hardscape and landscape features which must be balanced with ongoing maintenance considerations. Areas available for treatment include the center of the roundabout itself as well as medians and bike/ped crossings. Roundabout design elements could include:

- Asphalt paving or bare concrete
- Stamped or stained concrete
- Low maintenance landscaping
- Irrigated landscaping
- Ornamental lighting
- Art (sculptures, entry signage etc)

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Because the costs of the roundabout projects are not likely to be borne directly by the City, the primary financial consideration is the cost of ongoing long-term maintenance by City staff. CalTrans has stated that any treatments in the ROW that are not hardscaping will be maintained by the City.

RECOMMENDED COUNCIL ACTION:

1. Receive staff presentation and review Council questions with staff
2. Open Public Comment
3. Close Public Comment
4. Select a preferred alternative and direct staff to pursue designs accordingly

Sample Motion: I make a motion directing staff to move forward with design of the roundabout projects based on Council feedback and discussion.