



CITY OF BEXLEY TREE & PUBLIC GARDENS COMMISSION APPLICATION STAFF REVIEW

Project Name: TPGC-23-7 Drexel Ave Medians Landscape
 Project Address: Drexel Ave between Main St and Broad St
 Reviewed by: Elena Andrews
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 626-676-3330
 Date: 6-16-2023

	Project Description	Completed	Incomplete	Missing	N/A
1a	Application	X			
1b	Project Description	X			
	Research				
2a	Significant examples				X
	Design Documentation Drawings				
3a	Existing conditions photographs	X			
3b	Site plan or location plan	X			
3c	Schematic plan with north arrow and bar scale	X			
3d	Elevations, perspectives, isometrics, axonometrics or detailed model	X			
3e	Existing City trees indicated on plan	X			
3f	Proposed vegetation	X			
	Recommended information				
4a	Irrigation and maintenance plans				X
4b	Hardscape layout and materials				X
4c	Lighting locations and specifications				X
4d	Fixtures, furniture and equipment				X
4e	Accessories				X
4f	Buildings				X
4g	Other				X

Comments (*Italicized comments are from previous review*)

4g In an effort to slow traffic on Drexel Ave from 35 mph to 25 mph, the City has designed and is installing a series of 14 medians and 7 curb bump outs to provide shorter and safer pedestrian cross walks and sheltered on-street parking.

Street Trees:

The medians are an opportunity to increase the City's tree canopy coverage, however there are constraints to the area. The overall width of the medians is five feet with a six inch curb on each side, leaving four feet of clearance. There are numerous utility lines overhead that cross the street which limits the height of the median trees. The City investigated burying these utility lines and it was cost prohibitive. And there are mature trees along Drexel within the Right-of-Way that the median trees should not conflict with. Drexel Ave will continue to be plowed and salted so any plant material chosen needs to be salt tolerant.

Because of these constraints – limited root area, height, and salt tolerance – the *Prunus serrulata* 'Kwanzan' / Kwanzan Flowering Cherry was chosen as the street tree. Its maximum size is 25-30' tall by 25-30' wide, it has a vase shaped habit, is salt tolerant, and is recommended as a street tree to withstand difficult urban environments. The Cherry Tree blooms in April and will provide a vibrant display. In general, the trees are planted 12' on center in each of the medians. As a reference point, the cherry trees planted in the medians at City Hall are in a median that is 6' wide and are also planted 12' on center.

Each tree will be upit.

Groundcover:

The goal of groundcover in the City's medians has been to provide a simple and consistent look that unifies the ground plane. The precedent of groundcover in the Bexley medians has been *Euonymus fortunei* 'Coloratus' / Wintercreeper. This is an evergreen, hardy and salt tolerant plant that is readily available. It is, however, considered an invasive species in some areas in the United States but is not listed on the Ohio Department of Agriculture's website as an invasive plant. Wintercreeper is considered invasive groundcover due to its rigorous growth habits of setting new rootlets that form dense mats that can impede the growth of native seedlings. In the street medians, Wintercreeper is in a contained space and does not have the opportunity to take over larger areas blocking out other growth. Wintercreeper rarely flowers and forms seeds unless it is allowed to grow up trees and become quite mature. Therefore the spreading of the plant via seeds dropped by birds is not a consideration in the application of street medians.

City staff including the landscape consultant, arborists, service director, and crews from the water and street division were all consulted regarding the best selection for groundcover in the medians from a maintenance perspective. Consideration to provide native plants was taken quite seriously but there were no native plants that can operate in the varied sun conditions present, are evergreen, salt tolerant, nor can be found in the quantities needed. (1,700 plants are needed for the 14 medians.) The Wintercreeper in the medians on Main Street have done quite well which is a similar condition to expect along Drexel Ave. Those in the Broad Street medians have taken longer to establish due to the higher speeds causing more salt spray and more accidents damaging the plants which is not anticipated along Drexel Ave.

Natives that were considered were *Schizachyrium scoparium* (Little Bluestem), *Carex pensylvanica* (Sedge), *Panicum virgatum* 'Shenandoah' (Switch Grass), and *Phlox subulata* (Creeping Phlox). These

were ruled out for various concerns including height concerns, sunlight concerns, available quantities, and ability to withstand foot traffic.

Because of the above reasons, the recommended groundcover for the medians is Wintercreeper.

Signage:

The south end of median 1 and the north end of median 14 will have raised planters with annuals, street signage and an evergreen shrub. Given the limited width of the medians and the spacing, only these two areas will have special treatment. The design of the planters is based on the stone planters found along the entry medians to Bexley Park. The stone used will be the Indiana Limestone used at Havenwood Park but in 3" height stones instead of 6" height. Mid planter, a street sign for 'Drexel Ave' will be placed that will be uplit. The intent is to have low annuals in front of the sign and a Taxus hedge behind it, echoing the plants at the cross-street medians.

Two options are being presented to the Tree Commission for their final selection as to which design they prefer for the street sign. The first option has the circle motif at the bottom inspired by the Bexley Public Library and found on the cross street median signage. The second option has simple vertical rods at the base.

It is the staff recommendation to approve the landscape for the medians and move forward with the signage design based on the Tree Commission's decision.