



City of Santa Barbara
Parks and Recreation Department

Memorandum

DATE: October 16, 2007

TO: Janette Candau, Redevelopment Agency

FROM: Park and Recreation Commission
Street Tree Advisory Committee

SUBJECT: Casas Las Granadas Project Street Tree Recommendations

On October 12, 2007, the Park and Recreation Commission and Street Tree Advisory Committee (STAC) jointly met to discuss the Casas Las Granadas Street Trees and the proposed landscape plan. The following comments are primarily related to the street trees associated with the project, in acknowledgement that the proposed landscape plan for Casas Las Granadas was preliminary and not before the Commission for comment or approval at this time.

The group expressed concern and disappointment that a rushed decision needed to be made regarding this matter, although it was explained that the Public Works Department wanted to move forward so that sidewalks associated with the project could be paved prior to the start of the holiday season. In particular, the group was being asked to make definitive recommendations on placement of street trees without a final landscape plan for the Casas Las Granadas project before them.

Recommendations:

1. Recommend replacement of the four street trees somewhere in the project site to include at least two within the street, and the remainder as close as possible to the sidewalk in order to provide canopy for the sidewalk.
2. Recommend that staff work with the designer to determine the species of trees, and that the plan is to be reviewed by the Street Tree Advisory Committee.

Unanimous Voice Vote

Comments:

- There was much discussion about the fact that the replacement of four street trees was an original condition of approval when it came before the STAC and Commission, with the Aristocrat tree approved as the replacement tree. The group expressed frustration that now installation of the four trees is perceived to be a problem.
- With regard to the proposed plan to eliminate the street trees associated with the project, the group expressed significant concern for the starkness of the sidewalk, the bleakness of the pedestrian experience, and the lack of canopy trees to provide shade.
- Staff indicated that installation of utility meters related to the housing project reduced feasible locations for street trees along Anapamu Street, leaving room for

approximately two street tree locations. The group agreed that four trees need to be replaced even if it were a combination of street and canopy trees within the project area.

- There was a willingness to consider an alternative species instead of the originally approved Aristocrat.
- In particular, the project design needs to be re-evaluated in order to provide canopy trees closer to the sidewalk. It was also noted that a variation in tree height is needed in this project considering the mass of buildings.
- With regard to the Oak trees proposed in the preliminary landscape plan, one commissioner noted that Oak trees would be beautiful, but taller trees would also be good. STAC Member Cunningham said that the plan misrepresents how big the Oak trees get. He said, however, they take decades to reach their ultimate size, and there will be a big bright space for a long time. The group suggested alternative trees be considered.

cc: Nancy L. Rapp, Parks & Recreation Director
Jill E. Zachary, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director
Santos Escobar, Parks Manager
Timothy E. Downey, Urban Forest Superintendent
Paul Casey, Acting Public Works Director
Dave Gustafson, Acting Community Development Director