



**City of Santa Barbara**  
Parks and Recreation Department

**Memorandum**

**DATE:** November 16, 2011  
**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission  
**FROM:** Jill E. Zachary  
**SUBJECT:** Public Comment – Library Plaza Concept Plan Project

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The attached document was received from Robert Burke regarding the Library Plaza project.

## Central Library Plaza Proposal

This paper responds to the current plans to renovate the Central Library Plaza. The first is to quote from the Redevelopment Agency, providing the purpose of the agency and requirements to be met for a development project to proceed. The quotes regard blight, landscaping, and conservation. The authorities relied upon are the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Santa Barbara,<sup>1</sup> and the California Redevelopment Association.<sup>2</sup> This is followed by this writer's comments and recommendation.

### Redevelopment Agency and State Law Quotes

The Redevelopment Agency of the City of Santa Barbara is a public body corporate and politic, created and governed by the Santa Barbara City Council in 1968 to alleviate conditions of blight in the city's downtown, industrial, and waterfront areas. Established in 1972, the Central City Redevelopment Project Area encompasses 850 acres of this Pacific Coast seaside community.

The Redevelopment Agency's purpose is to:

1. Encourage harmonious environmentally compatible and economically efficient land uses throughout the Project Area, thereby achieving functional, economic and visual order
2. To coordinate such land uses and accompanying standards, controls and regulations with existing City controls and review processes
3. To create an economically viable central core that offers an attractive and pleasant environment.<sup>3</sup>

What is Redevelopment?

Redevelopment is a process created to assist local governments in eliminating physical and economic blight from a designated Redevelopment Project Area. . . . The goal of Redevelopment is to create a safe, economically viable and balanced project area that provides all of the socially desirable attributes communities want: sound public and private improvements, good jobs, safe places, strong commerce, recreational opportunities, decent and affordable housing, and increasing property values.<sup>4</sup>

The law requires that a Redevelopment Project Area must exhibit conditions of both physical and economic blight before any redevelopment activity can occur.

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1 <http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/Government/Departments/ComDev/HousingAndRedevelopment.htm>

2 [www.calredevelop.org](http://www.calredevelop.org)

3 <http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/Resident/Home/Redevelopment/RDA.htm>

4 <http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/SB/Templates/InteriorPage.aspx?NRMODE=Published&NRNODEGUID={4B2F3343-9C94-4C47-B612-860681029C73}&NRORIGINALURL=%2fResident%2fHome%2fRedevelopment%2fFAQs.htm&NRCACHEHINT=NoModifyGuest#redevelopment>

Physical blight may include graffiti, deterioration of buildings and property, irregularly shaped lots, and inadequate infrastructure to support development. The surveys and analysis of a proposed redevelopment project area must address whether or not these types of blighting conditions are present before a City Council can pass legislation permitting the use of redevelopment authority in that given area.

#### What is the Redevelopment Plan?

A Redevelopment Plan is a formally adopted document that identifies the boundaries of the Redevelopment Project Area, the existence of blight, the programs and projects that will be pursued to eliminate that blight and provide affordable housing, the time limits for redevelopment activities in the Redevelopment Project Area, and the specific powers that will be exercised by the Redevelopment Agency.<sup>5</sup>

#### L. (SEC. 426) CITIZENS ADVISORY TASK FORCES

For the purpose of public input, the Agency shall consider the formation of and may appoint Citizen Advisory Task Forces for each proposed activity area with approval of City Council.<sup>6</sup>

#### C. (SEC. 503) INTENT AND PURPOSE

It is the intent and purpose of the City and the Agency, in adopting the Land Use Plan and the accompanying standards, controls and regulations: (1) to encourage harmonious environmentally compatible and economically efficient land uses throughout the Project Area, thereby achieving functional, economic and visual order; (2) to coordinate such land uses and the accompanying standards, controls and regulations with existing City controls and review processes; and (3) to create an economically viable central core that offers an attractive and pleasant environment.<sup>7</sup>

In any sector of the Project Area the City or Agency may develop or assist development of public, semi-public, institutional, or nonprofit uses, including park and recreational facilities, libraries, hospitals, educational, fraternal, employee philanthropic and charitable institutions, and facilities of other similar associations or organizations. All such uses shall conform to the General Plan of the City.<sup>8</sup>

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5 <http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/SB/Templates/InteriorPage.aspx?NRMODE=Published&NRNODEGUID={4B2F3343-9C94-4C47-B612-860681029C73}&NRORIGINALURL=%2fResident%2fHome%2fRedevelopment%2fFAQs.htm&NRCACHEHINT=NoModifyGuest#redevelopment>

6 <http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/NR/rdonlyres/B39C4562-5710-4A9B-B190-C6BD6212BDD0/0/PlanAmended1998.pdf>

7 <http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/NR/rdonlyres/B39C4562-5710-4A9B-B190-C6BD6212BDD0/0/PlanAmended1998.pdf>

8 <http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/NR/rdonlyres/B39C4562-5710-4A9B-B190-C6BD6212BDD0/0/PlanAmended1998.pdf>

## 5. Open Spaces and Landscaping

a. The major land areas to be devoted to landscaped open space are included on Exhibit 3 of Part Two of this Plan. In addition thereto all new public and private development, redevelopment and rehabilitation work involving an Agency activity shall be required to provide landscaping and landscaped open space in at least the same proportion and to similar standards as development and rehabilitation in other parts of the Project Area and the City developed or rehabilitated since 1965.

b. Approving officials and regulatory bodies shall review and approve all open space and landscaping plans prior to construction or rehabilitation to ensure an optimum use of living plant and other landscape materials which shall be consistent in quantity and quality with landscaped open spaces in the Project Area.

f. Existing contours should be utilized in the site plan to avoid costly and unsightly grading to minimize erosion control problems, to conserve top soil and to preserve existing trees and shrubs.<sup>9</sup>

### Current Plans

This writer has called and emailed Campell and Campbell at least three times by phone and perhaps as many times by email. I have received no response. I attended a workshop for a short time. There was no mention of blight. The purpose was to make it look better and supposedly more functional for commercial vehicles. One slide of the old library before the current incarnation showed a level grassy area. Another showed a level grassy field with a large fountain in it.

The question arises, are the people proposing the current plans using the same words as those who offered their plans that got us to what we have, “. . . to provide a safe, accessible and appealing public open space that serves as the main entrance to the Central Library and the Faulkner Art Gallery and as a paseo from Anapamu Street to the Museum of Art and La Arcadia”<sup>10</sup>

The attached documents, such as the one supposedly from the library board, while recommending the project, do not mention any blight.

### Response

There is no blight in the current plaza of the Central Library. It is pleasant to look at, functional for foot traffic, and supply traffic to the library, and easy to use for commercial traffic. There is a passage from Anapamu to the main entrance, the plaza, and the museum. All corridors are safe, unobstructed, easy to walk down, and landscaped. The landscape could use improvement. There is no graffiti or very little. The concrete structures could use attention since they look old. However, the purpose of the proposed redevelopment as stated is already accomplished.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/NR/rdonlyres/B39C4562-5710-4A9B-B190-C6BD6212BDD0/0/PlanAmended1998.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> from the distributed flyer “Library Plasa Projedt, Frequently Asked Questions.”

The proposed grading changes to the accepted existing contour will incur costly and unsightly grading by removing top soil and imposing upon existing trees and shrubs without justification.

The current plans for the Central Library Plaza should be abandoned immediately to prevent wasting redevelopment funds, violating the Redevelopment Act as written, and destroying an already functional plaza.

It is this writer's belief that a law suit challenging the validity of the library plaza plans utilizing redevelopment funds and the validity of following state law would prevail.


This writer also speculates that the reason for the redevelopment is to make the plaza area hostile to the homeless, who occupy the plaza. Be this an unspoken truth, using taxpayer money to move on the homeless is an inappropriate means to solve the problem of the homeless taking up residence in the plaza.

Spending money on a library plaza that does not address blight, but wants to make things pretty, is inappropriate when the money can be used for the police department building, which is a blight, safety hazard, and inadequate, or housing for the poor. Please note that "decent and affordable housing" is a specific, mandated goal. While the police department is not expressly named, it qualifies as a blighted building according to the account unanimously expressed by the city council.

The remaining amount of the \$218,000 allotted for the design phase should be returned to the Redevelopment Agency treasury, the project terminated, and not be reconsidered for the rest of the term of this Redevelopment Agency, at least until the police department building is completed or funds have been spent on new housing for the poor.

The code states that blight must exist before the city council can authorize funds. It does not appear in any of the literature attached that the city council has stated that blight appears or that the supporting documents state that there is blight. Such test has not been met, and if it has been declared, the declaration of blight is misconstrued.

If the project is not terminated, a Citizen's Advisory Task Force should be implemented, as proscribed by law. The code states that if not formed, one must be considered. There is no note of such consideration. I volunteer for such a Task Force. Allowing this project to sally forth on its own impetus should be abandoned.

 Respectfully presented,  
Robert Burke



Agenda Item No. \_\_\_\_\_

File Code No. 570.04

## CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

### JOINT COUNCIL AND REDEVELOPMENT AGENDA REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** February 15, 2011

**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers  
Chair and Boardmembers

**FROM:** Housing and Redevelopment Division, Community Development  
Department

**SUBJECT:** Library Plaza Renovation Concept And Preliminary Design Services  
Contract

#### RECOMMENDATION:

- A. That the Agency Board allocate \$68,478 from the Agency's Project Contingency Account for the Library Plaza Renovation Project;
- B. That the Agency Board authorize the Deputy Director to execute a Professional Design Services Agreement, subject to approval by Agency Counsel, with Campbell and Campbell in an amount not to exceed \$159,280, for concept and preliminary design services for Library Plaza Renovation, and authorize the Deputy Director to approve expenditures of up to \$15,928 to cover any cost increases that may result from necessary changes in the scope of work;
- C. That Council adopt, by reading of title only, A Resolution of the Council of the City of Santa Barbara Approving and Adopting the Findings Required by Health and Safety Code Section 33445 for the Funding of Capital Improvements to Library Plaza; and
- D. That the City Council authorize the City Administrator and the Agency Board authorize the Executive Director to enter into a loan agreement, approved as to form by the City Attorney and Agency Counsel, by and between the City of Santa Barbara and the City of Santa Barbara Redevelopment Agency in an amount not to exceed \$2,000,000 to provide for the Agency's repayment of expenses incurred by the City for the design and construction of the Library Plaza Renovation Project.

#### DISCUSSION:

##### Background

On June 29, 2010, the Agency Board adopted the Fiscal Year 2010 Capital Program which included the allocation of \$150,000 toward the planning and design of the Library Plaza renovation. The concept envisions removal of walls to make the area level and a redesign consistent with the recently completed and successful Jardín de las Granadas

immediately across East Anapamu Street. Project goals include improved public safety, increased community-wide use, revenue generation for the Library Department, reduced maintenance costs and the incorporation of art either in the design or as separate discreet elements.

Conceptual & Preliminary Design Phase Consultant Services

Staff issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) and in October twelve (12) responses were received. Five teams were selected to be interviewed by a panel comprised of the Library Director, Library Services Manager, Parks Superintendent, Supervising Project Engineer, Redevelopment Supervisor and a Redevelopment Specialist. Campbell & Campbell was chosen through this Request for Proposal and a formal interview process.

Schedule

Development of the concept and preliminary designs is expected over a nine-month schedule and will involve participatory public workshop meetings in each phase. The Santa Barbara Museum of Art and other neighboring businesses on Anapamu Street have already expressed interest in the upcoming process. Final design services would be an additional cost addressed through a separate contract and brought to the Board for approval.

Environmental Review

The project will be reviewed under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Located within the City's El Pueblo Viejo District, the project design will be reviewed by the Historic Landmarks Commission.

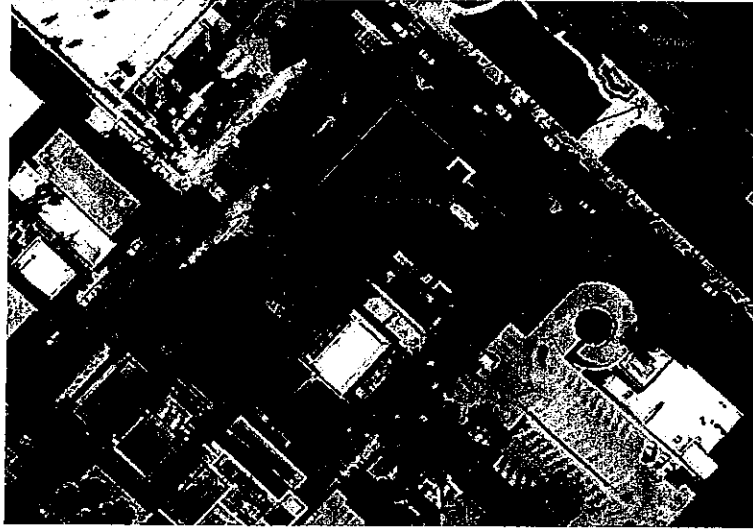
**BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:**

The Board appropriated \$150,000 toward the design effort based on staff's early estimate. Additional funding of \$68,478 is needed to undertake the process.

Design Contract	\$159,280
Design Contract Change Order Allowance (10%)	\$15,928
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$175,208</b>
Other Design Costs: survey work (by City Staff)	\$18,000
Other Design Costs: supplies	\$500
Design Management/Engineering Services (by City Staff)	\$24,770
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$43,270</b>
<b>TOTAL PROJECT DESIGN COST</b>	<b>\$218,478</b>

Expenditures to date total approximately \$28,000 for survey work (\$15,000) which has been completed and for City Engineering staff design management (\$13,000). Based on other capital projects with hardscape and landscape elements, and accounting for the size of the library plaza project area, staff has estimated that total design, project management, supplies and construction costs could reach \$2,000,000. Actual costs will be dependent upon the final design and the future construction bidding environment.

## Library Plaza Improvements



## Library Plaza Improvements

### Desired Outcome:

Through a public process, develop a draft landscape and engineering design to renovate Library Plaza, that

- Provides space for library activities and accommodate art
- Creates a public meeting space that is safe and inviting
- Integrates the library building and Faulkner Gallery with the neighborhood
- Reduces maintenance costs

### Project Milestones:

- Successful public process
- Approval by the Historic Landmarks Commission
- Project completed within budget